

Below are comments posted on the Daily Breeze's web page in response to the article in last Sunday's paper.

Ann Garten
310-660-3406
elcamino.edu

- [Mike Eskildsen](#) · [Sunday at 10:50am](#)

If I hear the word "Union" one more time, im going to puke.
Just fire all the 'Union' Teachers and hire Non-union ones. Today, there are Thousands of qualified people who would love to have a job. Just hire them, and problem solved.

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[DorXtar DorXtappallian](#) · [Sunday at 9:39pm](#)

· They'll work there just long enough to get tired of not being paid enough.



•

[Casey Clark](#) · 10 hours ago

DorXtar DorXtappallian LOL, if they dont like their pay there they sure the hell wont go into the private sector!

•

[Jerry Kosch](#) · [23 hours ago](#)

I love El Camino and am a proud graduate and an educator. I think the professors there make a fair salary when you compare it to K-12 teachers. The salaries of the upper level management are ridiculous. Why are coaches in the athletic department making \$150,000 a year? I think they are all lucky to have jobs. Let them go on strike and let's bust up their union.

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[John Thompson](#) · [Sunday at 12:49pm](#)

I guess the union doesn't like the Obama Care they backed!!

•

[Dave Knight Sunday at 4:23pm](#)

This is the "baby-boom" mentality, get used to it. "I'm getting mine and to hell with you." Greed has polluted and corrupted our entire society, not that this is a new thing, it's not. Greed has polluted societies since the beginning of time. But this is the generation that rebelled in the sixties against the establishment because of its corruption and greed. Now it has become the worst generation in American history. "Look folks, our elders have become nothing but hypocrites." I say impose the contract and let the chips fall where they fall.

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[Bob Diaz · Sunday at 8:34am](#)

The correct link is:

www.elcamino.edu/administration/hr/docs/Compensations-Over-100k-2010.pdf

Compton finds itself in full financial meltdown

latimes.com

The city is in such disarray that it amassed \$369,000 in late fees because it could not pay its policing contract with the Sheriff's Department. It has already laid off about 15% of its workforce. Most disconcerting is its looming deficit of \$39 million.

By Abby Sewell, Los Angeles Times

November 1, 2011

Compton's finances are in such disarray that the city amassed \$369,000 in late fees over the last year because it could not pay its policing contract with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on time.

The city has already laid off about 15% of its workforce, and city leaders warn that more cuts may be on the way. City Hall has slashed spending, even canceling the city's popular gospel concert.

But most disconcerting is the city's looming deficit of \$39 million, a sum that represents about 80% of its annual general fund budget. Standard & Poor this summer lowered the rating of some of Compton's bonds to just above junk status. City officials said they're hoping for a short-term loan or line of credit to get through the year and vowed not to file for bankruptcy.

As city leaders work frantically to turn the city's finances around, many residents are questioning how things got so bad so fast.

Just a few years ago, the national media were writing about the renaissance of Compton, where new businesses including Target and Home Depot were moving in and crime rates were plummeting.

But those boom times quickly went bust. Compton's new city manager, Lamont Ewell, said that years of poor decisions — coupled with the economic downturn — drained \$22 million in surplus reserves and left the city with crushing debts.

Year after year, as revenues fell short, Compton kept spending more. Between 2007 and 2011, the city hired 110 new employees. Expenditures kept rising, including project cost overruns, unexpected litigation, increases in salaries and benefits, and payouts of unused sick and vacation time to employees who had quit or were fired.

While cities in California have been hit hard by the recession, Compton is in a small class of cities that have ended up in critical condition. The cuts come at a bad time, with unemployment in the working-class community already at 20%.

For some, talk of a turnaround comes too late.

Johnnie Davis, 64, is one of the dozens of city workers who lost their jobs over the summer. He got notice that he would be laid off from his job as a City Hall night custodian as he was recovering from surgery for prostate cancer. Davis and his wife now have no health insurance, and he has had to postpone follow-up doctor's appointments because of a lack of funds.

Like many city employees, Davis said he had no idea the city was headed for a crash until the spring, when rumors of layoffs began to circulate.

"In my mind and everyone else's mind, the city was solid, and then this came out of nowhere," he said.

In reality, the descent happened gradually over five years, when officials went through the city's once-healthy reserves and then began raiding other funds, including those for water, sewer and retirement, to pay the bills.

In the summer of 2007, Compton had \$22 million in reserve, more than many of its neighbors. Its spending and revenue for the previous year matched up. A new shopping center was preparing to open and other developments were in the works.

"There were a lot of things coming online that, as a resident and an official, made me feel very optimistic," said Barbara Kilroy, who was city manager from 2004 to mid-2007. (She was one of three Compton city managers fired in the last five years. The most recent, Willie Norfleet, who was also the former city controller, got the ax in September.).

Over the next five years, the bubble deflated. Every year, the city spent more than it took in by more than \$10 million.

Compton saw its tax revenue plateau as the recession hit — better than some cities that have seen revenues sharply drop. But the city made overly optimistic projections each year, Ewell wrote in a report to the City Council in which he deconstructed some of the city's financial malaise.

Ewell said it was partly poor record-keeping and lack of internal controls that allowed the deficit to balloon. Outdated software, a breakdown in communication between

departments and a lack of policies to prevent administrators from spending reserve funds without council approval contributed to the snowballing problem.

Other officials and observers cited strife on the council and the rapid turnover in management staff as destabilizing factors that allowed the fiscal situation to fester. Staffers who were aware of the problems may have kept quiet out of fear of upsetting city leaders, said Michael Hill, a longtime resident who sits on the city's Planning Commission.

"In any political environment, there's a certain fear factor that if you're the squeaky wheel ... you'll end up being shown the door," he said.

By 2009, officials were using money from the water, sewer, retirement and other funds to paper over the shortfalls when the general fund ran short on cash for day-to-day operations. In its report for 2009, the city's independent audit firm chastised officials for the practice and for violating a city policy requiring council approval for budget changes.

Over the last five years, the general fund used at least \$16 million from other reserves without City Council approval and without a repayment plan, Ewell said. It is legal for the general fund to borrow from other funds, but the city is required to pay the money back with interest.

Even as Compton's financial situation crumbled, the city continued to pursue a costly plan to reopen its Police Department, which had been disbanded years before as a cost-saving measure. The city spent more than \$1 million on equipment for the new department, only to kill the idea when officials realized that it was cost-prohibitive.

Members of the politically divided City Council called the revelations of the extent of the city's deficit "eye-opening" but insisted that they will unite to help the city pull through. They have little choice. Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation last month that will make it much more difficult for cities to declare bankruptcy.

"We gotta find a common ground, and where the common ground is, is dealing with this budget situation," Mayor Eric Perrodin said, although there was little common ground at recent meetings, which devolved into shouting matches between the mayor and council members.

The task now facing city officials includes figuring out the size of the budget gap and then finding ways to plug it. Compton will need to make more cuts, restructure departments and look for concessions from the city's unions to avoid eliminating services or laying off more workers, Ewell said.

In the meantime, city residents and employees are left wondering what comes next. But

many are hopeful for a return to better times.

"Truth is a tough pill for most, but I think in this community, we have people that have come through much worse," said Hill, the planning commissioner.

Compton Bulletin November 2, 2011

Three Items:

- 1. Compton Community College District reaches out**
- 2. New Faculty**
- 3. CBOC ad**

Compton Community College District reaches out

2011-11-02 / Front Page

A campaign to involve citizens in the activities of district includes advisory committees

By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON— The Compton Community College District has launched an aggressive effort to reach out to the community, with a three- pronged strategy designed to encourage community participation.

“It’s important to keep the community informed about what’s going on in the district and with the Compton Center,” said interim CEO Dr. Keith Curry. “People want to know. And lack of accurate information can lead to the circulation of rumors that give a false picture of the district’s affairs.”

The district is forming a Special Trustee Advisory Committee that will be composed of seven members from the community. The committee will provide input to Special Trustee Thomas Henry, who will provide the members with updated information about decisions affecting El Camino Compton Center.

An informational session is scheduled for Nov. 30 at 6 p.m. in the CCCD boardroom, 1111 E. Artesia Blvd. “At this session we will explain what service on the committee will involve in the way of participation from the members,” said Curry. “Members will not receive compensation and will act in an advisory capacity only. But their input is very important and such a committee is one of the requirements of AB 318.”

AB 318 is the legislation that created the partnership agreement between El Camino Community College District and Compton Community College District.

Applications for the committee are available from the CEO’s office or online at www.compton.edu. They are also available by calling 310- 900-1600, Ext. 2000.

Applications must be submitted to the office of the interim CEO by Dec. 9, 2011, at 4:30 p.m.

A Citizens' Oversight Committee is also being formed. "Their job will be to inform the public about the expenditure of the money received from bonds authorized by the voters, including the Measure CC bond of \$100 million passed in 2002," said Curry.

The committee will ensure that bond revenues are expended only for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or replacement of district facilities and that no bond revenues are expended for teacher or administrative salaries, or for operating expenses other than the salaries of district employees who provide administrative oversight for the bond program or individual bond projects.

Applications are now available and must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 18 .

The Bond Oversight Committee will meet on a quarterly basis beginning in January 2012.

"Actually, we are repopulating the Bond Oversight Committee," Curry said. "It met once in September 2011 but attendance was lacking. We are looking for people who will take the responsibility seriously and attend the meetings."

The district has also initiated community participation in its board meetings. Different groups will sit on the dais on an alternating basis. "This month members of the student body will be seated on the dais," he said. "Next month the district board of trustees will be back."

The importance of sitting on the dais, as opposed to in the audience, lies in the fact that audience members only get one opportunity to speak and their time is limited to two or three minutes. Those on the dais have more opportunities to speak and more time allotted for their comments and questions.

"We decided to do something different at our monthly board meetings," Curry said. "We want to give the community a chance to give us their input and help us make decisions on issues that affect the college and the district. Any group in the community can receive an invitation to sit on the dais by calling Special Trustee Tom Henry at 310- 900-1500, Ext. 2000."

The district expects an overwhelming response from the community. "We are very excited about this," said Curry. "It will give the opportunity to community members to become engaged in the district. They will be able to help us shape the district's operations for the next five or 10 years. Community members will also have the opportunity to promote higher education in the district."

El Camino Compton Center hires new faculty members

2011-11-02 / News

From staff reports



Karla Coti COMPTON—El Camino College Compton Center has hired four full-time faculty members.

Karla Coti is a chemistry instructor. After graduating magna cum laude in 2004 from California State University Los Angeles with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, Coti went on to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry from UCLA in March 2010 and was awarded a Dissertation Year Fellowship. She has served as a teaching assistant for UCLA's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and as a student research advisor at Northwestern University, UCLA and CSU Los Angeles. Most recently she was an adjunct chemistry instructor at both Glendale Community College and El Camino College Compton Center.

Brent Kooiman will be an instructor in the Auto Collision and Repair program. He brings 30 years of experience in the auto collision repair and refinishing industry. He has worked in every aspect of the field including estimator, technician, and collision repair shop owner, as well as serving as an instructor. He earned his associate degree in automotive collision repair from Cerritos College. Kooiman has also served as an adjunct instructor at both Cerritos College and El Camino College.



Brent Kooiman Dale Ueda will be a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) instructor. After earning a bachelor's degree in business administration from California State University Dominguez Hills, and an initial career with the United Parcel Service, Ueda completed the HVAC apprenticeship program through the state of California. He is now a certified journeyman with more than 11 years in HVAC and refrigeration fitting experience. Since 1999, Ueda has served as an adjunct instructor at El Camino College. In 2009 he joined the adjunct faculty at ECC Compton Center, where he has contributed to program review and student learning outcome statement development for the HVAC programs at both locations. Ueda has also served as an adjunct faculty member at Long Beach City College and Orange Coast College.



Dale Ueda Cassandra Washington is an instructor of child development. An alumna of El Camino College, she received a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from California State University Dominguez Hills and a master's degree in education from California State University Los Angeles with a minor in early childhood education. She has served as an adjunct instructor at ECC Compton Center since 2009, and has more than 12 years experience in early childhood care and education. Since 1995, she has worked at the Los Angeles County Office of Education as an educator and tutor.

Since 2006, Washington has also served as a youth counselor at the Starview Adolescent Treatment Center in Torrance.

El Camino College Compton Center offers a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a fouryear university or train for a career. El Camino College Compton Center is located at 1111 E. Artesia Blvd.



Cassandra Washington

**The Compton Community College District
is currently accepting applications
for positions on the Measure CC
Bond Oversight Committee**



*The application for the Measure CC
Bond Oversight Committee
is available online at
www.district.compton.edu
and in the Office of the Interim CEO*

**Potential applicants are advised to attend
an Information Session:**

**Wednesday, November 2, 2011
at 6:00 p.m.**

Compton Community College District Board Room

Applications may be submitted to:
Keith Curry, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Compton Community College District
1111 E. Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90221

**Applications must be received no later than:
Friday, November 18, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.**

**For more information, or if you have questions,
please call 310-900-1600, ext. 2000.**

<http://www.thecomptonbulletin.com/ROP/large/ComptonCommunityCollegeDistrict.htm>

LEND LEASE COMPLETES SOCIAL SCIENCE BUILDING



The Lend Lease Los Angeles office recently completed the renovation of the El Camino College Social Science Building in Torrance, CA.

Lend Lease, acting as construction administrator/owner's representative, oversaw the interior demolition of the facility's non-structural materials, down to the concrete structure, followed by the reconstruction of the building's interiors including new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, ADA compliant restrooms, security cameras, voice over internet protocol communications, Wi-Fi internet access and architectural finishes. Site work included paving, ramps, security cameras, ADA compliant parking stalls and landscaping.

The two-story, 32,000 square foot Social Science Building, constructed in 1959, presented numerous challenges including the repair of significant floor cracks discovered during demolition. Approximately 2,500 linear feet of flexural cracks were revealed in the second floor elevated slab. The project team, acting on the structural engineer's recommendation, repaired the cracks with epoxy injection. Another challenge was coordinating the utility installation in the ceiling space, maintaining the desired ceiling heights without compromising system design. The project team addressed and resolved all project challenges with no impact to the schedule.

Construction on the project began in July 2010 and completed, on schedule, in July 2011. ECC occupied the facility on August 1, prior to the college's fall semester. The project was funded (50%) by the State of California and (50%) by a local bond fund.

Lend Lease (US) Construction Inc.
800 West 6th Street, 16th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213 430 4660
www.lendlease.com



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Task force moves toward rationing access to community colleges

LA TIMES, October 29, 2011

After years of funding cuts, the open-door system must change and prioritize, the panel suggests, starting with a 22-point reform plan.

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

October 29, 2011

Jasmine Delgado is one of the lucky ones. With advice from an older sister, the Santa Monica College student developed a plan that has helped her enroll in the classes she needs to transfer next year to a four-year university.

But many California community college students lack the motivation, guidance and resources to reach that goal. So, for the past year, a statewide task force has been studying ways to help them get there.

The panel held its first town hall meeting this week at the L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce, attracting a packed audience of educators, community members and students who were given an overview and the chance to comment on draft recommendations that will be presented to the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors.

The proposals are for sweeping reforms that would move toward rationing access to community colleges, compel students to take more responsibility for their education and prioritize the types of classes being offered.

Under the state's Master Plan for Higher Education, community colleges have long offered an open door for anyone who sought to benefit. But the task force suggests that after years of state funding cuts, community colleges can no longer be all things to all people.

"To participate fully in education without accountability is a wonderful ideal, but that's not the reality we're in," said task force chairman Peter MacDougall, a member of the colleges' board. "How do we use our limited resources? There have to be priorities and there has to be focusing."

The 22 recommendations seek to "reboot" the system by prioritizing registration and fee waivers for students who participate in assessment and orientation programs, and who have concrete goals, such as a degree, certificate or to transfer to a four-year college. The panel estimates that tightening the criteria for fee waivers could save about \$89 million annually, which could fund new support services.

Course offerings and schedules would be aligned to students' needs, including focusing on basic

skills and classes needed to transfer. More authority would be given to the California Community Colleges chancellor to implement reforms over the state's 72 college districts and 112 colleges.

Campuses would be required to publish a score card, detailing their performance in such areas as completion rates.

Reaction to the effort was mixed at Thursday's town hall.

"If students have access but are never going to get anything out of it, I don't think we should be applauding that," said Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the nonprofit Campaign for College Opportunity. She said her group will use its resources to support the measures.

The Faculty Assn. of California Community Colleges said it has not yet developed a formal response to the report.

For students like Nick Avetisian, the greatest need is for more class offerings.

"There might be 40 students already registered and 100 more trying to add," said Avetisian, 20, a Los Angeles City College student studying finance. "I think the score card is a good idea and would help you figure out what kind of school you're going to."

Delgado, 18, vice president of student government at the Santa Monica campus, said she hopes the panel will get more student input before presenting its recommendations. She is particularly concerned that campuses maintain access for low-income and other disadvantaged students.

"The points they raise are relevant but there are a lot of policies restricting the kind of access we have now," she said.

carla.rivera@latimes.com

Dan Walters: New pension push could help Jerry Brown

By Dan Walters

dwalters@sacbee.com

Published: Friday, Nov. 4, 2011 - 12:00 am | Page 3A

An oft-repeated cliché of political discourse – whose exact origin is unclear – goes something like this: "They didn't see the light until we turned up the heat."

Like many clichés, it has a valid core, and the California version is that the Legislature has tended to ignore a difficult issue until someone threatens to take it to the voters via an initiative ballot measure.

That was certainly true when Proposition 13, the progenitor of the modern era of ballot measure activism, qualified for the 1978 ballot.

Then-Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature just fiddled around with the explosive growth of property taxes, but they didn't get serious until after Proposition 13 qualified. They cobbled together their own measure on property tax relief, but voters soundly rejected it as they adopted Proposition 13.

Likewise, legislators got serious about bumping up sentences for repeat offenders only after they knew that a "three-strikes-and-you're-out" measure was headed for the 1994 ballot.

Over time, the threat of an initiative has been wielded specifically to gain attention from otherwise uninterested lawmakers.

Arnold Schwarzenegger used it effectively in the first months of his governorship, when his popularity was still high, to bulldoze a very reluctant Legislature into making major changes in the state's system of compensating workers for work-related injuries and illnesses, despite opposition from unions and their allies.

But it doesn't always work, as Schwarzenegger learned when he tried to repeat his feat a year later on a package of budget reforms that unions opposed. The Legislature stiffed him, and he failed miserably at the polls.

Local government leaders succeeded when they drafted an initiative to protect their funds from raids by the state. Schwarzenegger and legislators responded with a less restrictive alternative that local officials accepted and voters endorsed.

Ironically, when the loopholes in the alternative were later used to stage another budget raid, the local officials reacted with a tighter measure, which was passed last year.

Given that history, one might wonder whether a new initiative measure that would overhaul California's public pensions could help Brown, who's now back in the governor's office, gain legislative approval for his own pension reform package.

Unions may dislike Brown's proposal, but they utterly despise the pending initiative measure and fear that should it reach the ballot – by no means certain – recession-stressed voters would embrace it to send a message, not unlike what happened in 1978 vis-à-vis property taxes.

Accepting a substantial version of Brown's reforms – not just its low-hanging fruit, such as pension-spiking – may be the unions' best weapon against the tougher initiative.

Reform/revenue plan for '12 ballot

Higher taxes coupled with finance, personnel reforms

By John Fensterwald - Educated Guess

A partnership of education, parent, and business groups is aiming to put on the November 2012 ballot an initiative combining sweeping education reforms with a tax increase dedicated to preschool to twelfth grade, called The 2012 Kids Education Plan.

In a short statement (see below), the dozen groups used the code words for fundamental changes in school funding and personnel laws like teacher tenure without yet citing specifics: “a student centered finance system, true transparency, significant workforce reforms, and new investments in education through a statewide broad based revenue source and lowering the voter threshold on local revenue” (a reference to the current two-thirds majority needed to pass a parcel tax).

Ted Lempert, president of Oakland-based Children Now, said the groups were considering a tax that would raise \$6 billion to \$8 billion annually for education – the equivalent of roughly an additional \$1,000 to \$1,330 per student – an amount that would recover much of the state funding that has been cut over the past three years. While a big ask in a recession, it would still fall shy of raising California’s per-student funding to the national average.

Those who have signed on to the effort so far include one member of the Education Coalition, the Association of California School Administrators; Children Now; Bay Area Council, a San Francisco-based business group; United Way of Greater Los Angeles; Education Trust-West; San Francisco-based Silver Giving Foundation; the new parent groups Educate Our State, Educacy and Parent Revolution; and three prominent superintendents: Mike Hanson of Fresno Unified, Chris Steinhauser of Long Beach Unified, and Tony Smith of Oakland Unified.

At this point, Lempert said, it’s still in the discussion phase. Over the past month, Lempert said, he and others have reached out to other groups that have signaled interest but have not committed, like the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, California PTA, and the California Teachers Association (no official comment yet from the CTA). Also, “key folks in the Brown administration are interested in what we are pushing,” Lempert said. “I hope they get behind this.”

The presidential election ballot is expected to be jammed with initiatives, including pension and state governance reforms. Lots of ideas for tax increases – reconfiguring Proposition 13, hitting up millionaires, taxing oil production to support higher education – are floating around, though still in flux. Lempert said that a broad-based tax that business groups could support, focused on pre-K to grade 12 education, would most

appeal to voters and have the best chance of passing. With big backers behind it, a Kids Education Plan would dominate, if not chase off, other initiatives.

If \$6 billion, tied to reforms, sounds familiar, that's because Gov. Schwarzenegger's bipartisan Committee on Education Excellence, led by Ted Mitchell, a Democrat, recommended the same amount and strategy four years ago. Schwarzenegger blew off the committee's report, but the ideas – many stemming from the voluminous studies Getting Down to Facts in 2007 – and the approach have been simmering on back burners. “The concept is to do it all together, to put it in one package and get it done,” Lempert said. “You can get more money for education if it includes reform.”

The need to settle on the initiative's wording and to start collecting signatures by January at the latest leaves only about two months to reach agreement on which reforms and which tax. Consensus will demand few hard-and-fast positions.

A student-centered finance system with transparency is shorthand for replacing the complex system of legacy-based funding, with dozens of categorical grants, with a system based on student needs, with more money for poor students and English learners.

The principle behind workplace reforms, Lempert said, is removing obstacles in state law preventing districts from exerting more control over hiring, including tenure, and promoting and dismissing staff. Three groups in the coalition – United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Public Advocates, and Education Trust-West – have pushed for more rigorous evaluation systems. Public Advocates also represents plaintiffs in the suit Campaign for Quality Education, charging that the state inadequately funds its schools.

Several key bills now before the Legislature would address some of the initiative's key reforms: Assemblywoman Julia Brownley's AB 18 on school financing and Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes' AB 5 on teacher evaluations. But, reflecting both the compressed timing and uncertainty over whether the Legislature will pass strong bills, the coalition intends to write the reforms into the initiatives, leaving perhaps companion bills to the Legislature.

In an email, California State PTA Executive Director Paul Richman said that the PTA disagrees with this approach, while expecting to support one ballot measure funding education next year. “We believe new funding to restore programs that have been cut for students is foremost and that other potential reforms, many of which we'd get behind, can be accomplished legislatively,” he said.

Dennis Cima, vice president of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, another likely ally of the effort, said that the organization agrees with many of the priorities in the initiative and could support a broad-based tax, but will be watching to see what else is being

proposed for next November. Noting that an initiative can be a blunt instrument, he said, "Is the ballot the best way?"

It may be if the intent is to ensure that reforms are passed, not watered down or frittered away by the Legislature.

Student success plan prompts worries about special services cuts

California Watch

November 4, 2011 | [Erica Perez](#)

California community college faculty and community members questioned this week whether draft recommendations from a task force aimed at increasing student success could have negative consequences for groups that receive special services, such as English as a Second Language students, CalWORKs recipients and foster care parents.

Representatives from the 20-member Student Success Task Force and the chancellor's office have been canvassing the state to get feedback on a plan they hope will help more students earn degrees or certificates, transfer to four-year universities, and navigate college more successfully.

The task force will present a final set of recommendations to the Board of Governors in December, along with a report to the state Legislature by March 2012. Ultimately, the Board of Governors would have to vote on the recommendations. Some of the proposals would require legislative changes. Others would require additional funding.

On Wednesday, task force member and Merced College President Benjamin Duran joined Chancellor Jack Scott and Executive Vice Chancellor for Programs Erik Skinner at Fresno City College to address a crowd of about 150 people.

One of the report's more controversial recommendations would take eight separate programs that have their own strict funding streams and lump them together into one big, flexible pot. These include programs such as basic skills, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and foster care.

The idea is that this big pot, which would be named the Student Support Initiative, would give colleges the flexibility to target the money on student success strategies that best fit their schools. Colleges wouldn't be required to change how much they fund each of these programs, but they would have more discretion.

But several people in the audience expressed concern that their program would see a reduction in funding as a result.

One foster parent from Fresno said the recommendation could decimate the Foster and Kinship Care Education Program, which provides education and support for foster parents and providers of kinship care – full-time care of children by their relatives or other kin – so that they can meet the special needs of these children.

The colleges now get \$5.2 million in state Proposition 98 funds for the program. That expenditure helps the state draw down federal funds under Title IV-E, and the colleges also receive a chunk of that money for the foster kinship program – about \$5 million.

Sue Shaw, coordinator of the Foster and Kinship Care Education Program at Fresno City College, said she's worried that if the community colleges reduce the amount of money they spend on foster care, the federal government would provide fewer matching funds for the program – doubling the impact of the cuts.

“We’ve heard that around the state on a number of programs,” said Skinner, the executive vice chancellor. “I can assure you that the college presidents on the task force have expressed strongly that foster care programs would be the types of programs that would continue. The assumption that the programs would go away simply because the flexibility was provided was not what was envisioned here.”

But Skinner also acknowledged in an interview that the foster care funds aren't focused on student success. So despite the strong support for them, they could see cuts under this proposal.

"Flexibility will open up the door to directing dollars to other needs and priorities," he said. "Potentially, dollars could be diverted away from this."

Chancellor Scott told Shaw that the change would require legislation and that concerns like hers would come up at legislative committee hearings.

A staffer from one of the colleges' CalWORKs programs had similar worries about whether the colleges could still get federal funding if the local funding is shifted to something else. Task force officials indicated they're aware of that quandary and are trying to sort it out.

Colleges get state CalWORKs funds to provide services like work study, job placement and child care to welfare-recipient students and students who are transitioning off welfare.

Similar to the foster care program, the colleges' expenditures help draw down federal matching dollars for the state's CalWORKs program. Colleges now get about \$27 million in state funds for CalWORKs, plus about \$8 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding.

“We’re looking at the drawdown issue,” said Amy Supinger, executive director of the task force. “We’re not convinced we’re not able to draw down the federal dollars.”

Audience member Hector Duarte, who said he's been working with disadvantaged students for more than 20 years, voiced a more general fear that the recommendation would take the colleges back to the 1960s, before legislation forced the colleges to establish categorical grant programs for disadvantaged groups.

“These programs we talk about were made for a reason, because the system failed,” Duarte said. “We want to keep our doors open to all those in our community. ... Let’s not shut these doors on those students.”

Skinner responded that one of the task force’s goals is to shrink the achievement gap between white and minority students at the community colleges. Minority students have lower rates of degree completion, transfer and other success measures.

“The task force has said throughout its deliberation that it does not want to push forward on improving our student success rates at expense of particular populations,” Skinner said.

In addition to concerns about categorical programs, task force members heard from English as a Second Language faculty and students concerned that the report would eliminate non-credit ESL classes or would put ESL students at a greater disadvantage.

One of the report's recommendations proposes changing the law to limit state funding for non-credit classes to only those identified as career development or college preparation. The idea was to stop subsidizing recreational classes, such as arts for seniors. But some non-credit ESL courses would be caught in the same net, Skinner said.

Scott indicated that the task force would possibly clarify the recommendations to protect ESL.

"As we've tested these, one or two have unintended consequences we didn't realize," he said. "ESL is one of them. There was no intention of eliminating ESL non-credit courses."

Ruth Luman, an ESL instructor at Modesto Junior College, was more concerned about the impact of recommendations on basic skills education, which includes pre-collegiate English and math, as well as credit ESL classes. The recommendation states that "the time and resources devoted to basic skills instruction need to be balanced with the other missions of the system, namely occupational training, academic preparation, and transfer."

Luman questioned whether that recommendation meant that colleges would prioritize students whose basic skills could be met in a shorter period of time. She said such a move would disadvantage English-language learners. If these students couldn't take credit ESL classes, they would miss out on financial aid, she said.

"Consider the challenges that our ESL students have, not because they are developmental learners, but because they're learning a foreign language," she said. "They need to be given more opportunities than their native-English-speaking counterparts in the community college system. I would like you to try to reconsider some of the recommendations made specifically for ESL students."

Scott urged Luman to submit any concerns about specific recommendations to the task force. "I don't recall any kind of discussion that was in any sense deprecating ESL," he said. "If there's some language that inadvertently has had some bad consequences for ESL students, we encourage you to submit that language."

The task force meets again Nov. 9 in Sacramento to discuss feedback from the statewide meetings, and town halls are scheduled throughout the month.

Dan Walters: Profligacy persists in California

By Dan Walters
dwalters@sacbee.com

Published: Saturday, Nov. 5, 2011 - 11:00 pm | Page 3A

California's budget runs chronic deficits, public pension systems are chronically underfunded and the fund that pays benefits to a million-plus unemployed workers is running huge deficits and dependent on federal loans.

The common thread is that politicians have endemically spent more – often much more – than underlying revenues can support.

The archetypal example occurred in 2000 when the state reaped a huge, one-time windfall of income taxes as the high-tech industry's boom cooled and its employees hastily cashed in stock options.

Then-Gov. Gray Davis declared, "I intend to resist the siren song of permanent spending whether it comes from the left or the right, and I will stand up to anyone who tries to convince the Legislature that they should spend most or all of this money on ongoing expenses."

The pledge quickly turned to dust as he and the Legislature committed about two-thirds of the money to permanent spending and tax cuts, and the result a year later was a multibillion-dollar deficit.

It is, however, only one example of a spend-now, worry-later ethos.

A year earlier, Davis and the Legislature had enacted a huge, retroactive increase in state employees' pension benefits on blithe assurances from the California Public Employees' Retirement System that its high-flying investments could handle the cost without additional taxpayer funds. That's proved to be false by billions of dollars a year.

And in 2001, Davis and lawmakers nearly doubled unemployment insurance benefits without raising payroll taxes.

At the time, the Unemployment Insurance Fund had a \$6.5 billion surplus, but the benefit boost left it unable to cope with recession and it's now more than \$10 billion in the hole.

Democrat Davis' profligacy was a major reason for his recall and the election of Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger, who pledged to end "crazy deficit spending."

But his first gubernatorial act in 2003 was to reinstate a multibillion-dollar cut in car taxes, followed almost immediately by a bond issue to cover budget deficits.

And in 2006, Schwarzenegger, et al., squandered another short-term windfall on new spending.

As recession lingers, the bipartisan history of expedient, irresponsible fiscal decisions continues to haunt the state.

Gov. Jerry Brown, elected on a promise to avoid budget gimmicks, nevertheless resorted to a fanciful projection of \$4 billion in extra revenue to balance the 2001-12 budget on paper – money that so far isn't showing up and probably won't.

And he signed a bill that delays action on a union-opposed ballot measure that would compel the state to shift future windfalls into emergency reserves.

Meanwhile, bean counters are projecting another multibillion-dollar deficit for the 2012-13 budget.

The beat goes on.

Mount St. Mary's College Awarded \$6-Million Grant to Boost Women's Achievement in Sciences, Math

The Sacramento Bee

By Mount St. Mary's College

Published: Friday, Nov. 4, 2011 - 12:04 pm

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 4, 2011 -- /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles has been awarded a five-year, \$6-million dollar Title III federal grant to enhance curricula and support for Hispanic, female and low-income students in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, known as STEM disciplines.

The grant, titled "Improving STEM Curricula, Support and Articulation for Hispanic, Women and Low-Income Students," will support institutional development in STEM-related areas in partnership with El Camino College in Torrance, Calif. The Mount will serve as the lead institution with \$1.2 million in funding each year from Oct. 1, 2011 to October 2015.

Among the main components of the grant, the Mount will: repurpose five classrooms into high-tech science and mathematics centers; intensify faculty development; enhance undergraduate research opportunities in STEM fields; increase the number of students graduating with bachelor's degrees in these fields; and align math and science coursework at the two-year El Camino College with requirements at the Mount. The grant also will fund support centers at both colleges staffed with career and academic advisors, provide summer workshops to support and retain first- and second-year students in these areas and add a new environmental science major at the Mount.

"This grant is excellent for students because it's going to help us develop our faculty and develop the institution itself," said the Mount's Title III project coordinator Larry Smith, vice president of information services/enrollment management. "Our concerns are to strengthen the faculty and to make sure the students are having the best educational experience possible."

The Mount is among 109 institutions nationwide receiving a total of \$100 million from the U.S. Department of Education beginning this October to enhance science, technology, engineering and math components at schools that enroll a high percentage of Hispanic students. "We know that Latinos will play an integral part in helping America reach President Obama's goal of having the highest college graduation rate in the world by 2020," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "These programs will help to spur academic achievement for Hispanic students, especially

within STEM programs, which are key to building a highly-skilled workforce that can compete in a global marketplace."

As the only Catholic college for women west of the Mississippi, Mount St. Mary's is focused on helping more women attain degrees in the science and math disciplines. The College is drafting its own Report on the Status of Women in California, scheduled to be released in April 2012. Among the report's key findings, fewer women than men are enrolled in science and math majors in California's four-year colleges and universities, according to data from the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

Data show that as girls get older and move up in grade level, they underperform in higher-level math and science courses compared to boys, and are eventually less-represented in Advanced Placement classes such as calculus, physics and chemistry. In 2009, President Barack Obama launched the Educate to Innovate campaign aimed at encouraging excellence in science and math among young people across America. The initiative identifies Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education as the key for America's future growth, and makes a commitment to increase STEM literacy among all students, as well as expand education and career opportunities for underrepresented groups, including women and minorities.

About MSMC Founded in 1925, Mount St. Mary's College is a Catholic, liberal arts college offering undergraduate education for women, as well as innovative undergraduate and graduate programs for professional men and women on two historic campuses in Los Angeles. The mission of Mount St. Mary's is to provide a superior education enhanced by an emphasis on building leadership skills and fostering a spirit to serve others. For more information go to www.msmc.la.edu or call 310.954.4000.

District edges toward state takeover

Inglewood Unified squeezed by cuts, own blunders

Posted on 11/07/11

By John Fensterwald - Educated Guess

Many school districts are worried about running out of money this year. San Diego Unified, the state's second largest district, is openly talking about it. But surprisingly, given the financial pressures on all K-12 districts, only one district is in grave danger of insolvency: 12,000-student Inglewood Unified, southwest of Los Angeles.

Last month, the board of the little-known but powerful state agency, the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, or FCMAT, approved a declaration of fiscal emergency for Inglewood, the first step leading to the state issuing a loan and taking over the district. It's a four- to six-month process, requiring the Legislature's two-thirds majority approval, and it's still possible that the district can stave off the equivalent of bankruptcy this year, but only with a series of "ifs" breaking its way:

... if there aren't midyear state cuts to K-12 schools;

... if teachers and classified employees agree to more give-backs: benefits cuts and more furlough days – which at this point appears doubtful;

... if the State Board of Education this week grants waivers to allow huge class sizes in grades 4 to 8, over the opposition of many parents and teachers;

... if district officials can convince its suppliers – health care providers being the biggest – to shift some bills from the end of this year to next to ease the cash flow;

... and if the district can then convince private lenders in the next few months to deem Inglewood creditworthy to receive short-term loans called TRANs (Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note).

It's looking increasingly grim, with the district now projecting a negative cash balance of \$4 million in April, soaring to nearly \$26 million by the end of June. Meanwhile, parents have voted a lack of confidence with their feet: The district lost another 900 students this fall, with families pulling kids out and sending many of them to charter schools.

The leadership of the Inglewood Teachers Association voted to support a state takeover instead of bigger classes, approaching 50 in some high school subjects, and more givebacks and furlough days. As union President Pete Somberg told the Daily Breeze, "We don't see how the current leadership is able to do that when all they are looking for

is financial daylight so they can maintain local control. If local control means ransoming a generation of kids, we are not for it.”

But as Glenston Thompson, the assistant superintendent and numbers guy who Inglewood brought in last summer to save the ship, responds, “Be careful what you wish for.”

State, county, and FCMAT officials uniformly warn that a state takeover of a district – and that includes too-big-to-fail San Diego Unified – should be the last resort, a trap to be avoided, because getting out of state receivership is costly (King City Unified, the last district to get a state loan, in 2009, is paying 5 percent interest plus the salary of a state-appointed administrator and advisers) and lengthy (as long as two decades to pay off). The administrator replaces the superintendent and makes all academic and financial decisions; district trustees lose all authority.

Inglewood would be the ninth district in two decades to be taken over, joining Oakland, Emery, Coachella Valley, Compton, West Fresno, Vallejo City, West Contra County and King City in the hall of shame.

Like other districts, Inglewood Unified has been slammed by budget cuts and the failure of the state to pay its bills on time. Deferrals now account for 38 percent of revenue limit payments (the portion not covered by property taxes), creating massive cash-flow challenges.

But the difference between Inglewood and most districts is massive declining enrollment and bad management.

Over the past eight years, enrollment has plunged nearly a third, from nearly 18,000 students to about 12,260 this year. A FCMAT analysis in from a year ago found that the district failed to anticipate and respond to the hemorrhaging of students. Only now is it moving to combine two elementary schools with fewer than 200 students. (The financial impact of losing state reimbursements for 900 students this year actually won't be felt until next year's budget.)

FCMAT pointed to other deficiencies:

Failure to maintain reserve levels;

Insufficient consideration of long-term bargaining agreement effects;

Poor cash flow analysis and reconciliation;

Bargaining agreements beyond state COLA;

Ineffective management information systems;

Lack of regular monitoring of categorical programs.

“There is a lack of direct oversight in the business office,” the report said. “Combined with an insufficient level of technical competence, this has created flawed budget assumptions, duplication of revenues and poor enrollment projections.”

Special education was a huge problem. The district failed to monitor the costs of out-of-district placements of handicapped students. Special education’s encroachment of \$12 million equaled about a sixth of the district’s general fund budget.

Severe cuts and layoffs, to no avail

Last spring, staring in the face of a budget deficit and cash shortage, the Inglewood board cut more than \$24 million, about 20 percent of its total budget. It laid off 200 teachers, nearly a third of the staff, which, in turn, has led to class sizes beyond the legal limits. With the county’s help, the district was able to get most of the state deferrals waived, and it squeaked by through internal borrowing, according to Melvin Iizuka, director of business advisory services for the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Through painful cuts and better budgeting, the district was able to persuade Iizuka’s office to approve this year’s budget. But that will be a short-lived reprieve, achieved only because the Legislature banned county offices from using two- and three-year budget projections in authorizing school districts’ budgets this year. But in an Oct. 20 letter, while crediting its “considerable progress,” Los Angeles County Superintendent Arturo Delgado notified the district that his office determined that the district won’t be able to meet its commitments this year and next and will be certified negative.

State Board of Education’s dilemma

Having been inundated with emails urging the State Board not to grant waivers for larger classes in Inglewood, State Board member Carl Cohn visited Bennett-Kew Elementary School last week. It was the same school that years ago, when he was the Long Beach Unified superintendent, he would take his principals to visit, because of its extraordinary achievement.

What he saw last week disturbed him, he said. “I saw enthusiastic teachers and kids focused on classroom instruction; there was lots of resilience under these circumstances,” he said. “But the circumstances were extremely challenging. I saw classrooms in dilapidated bungalows with upwards of 35 students and not much space.”

If Cohn and the State Board deny the waivers, the district will have to hire back teachers it cannot afford to pay, compounding its budget problems. But to continue to approve waivers for 30 to 38 students per classroom in Inglewood and elsewhere, “we will break the backs of those who do the work.”

“I don’t have a magic answer. All I know is what I see: hardworking, dedicated teachers overwhelmed in California public schools.”

Teachers Are Actually Overpaid, Report Says

AolJobs.com

By Claire Gordon, Posted Nov 4th 2011 @ 3:28PM

The fact that public-school teachers are undervalued in this country has become something of a truism. They are "desperately underpaid," according to Education Secretary Arne Duncan. They are "the most undervalued resource in our society," claimed talk show host Tavis Smiley. "Salaries are too low," said George W. Bush in 2003. But a new report suggests that the opposite may be true.

Jason Richwine and Andrew Biggs, researchers at the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, two leading conservative think tanks, argue in a new report that the country's 3.2 million teachers may be overpaid by over 50 percent or more, given their salary, benefits, job security, and intellectual ability.

This isn't the first study to take on the politically sizzling issue of how much we pay the molders of our nation's young. And shockingly, the results fall pretty cleanly along ideological lines.

According to Census data, Richwine and Biggs admit that teachers do look underpaid; they receive a 20 percent lower salary than private-sector workers with the same level of education, and have benefits approximately the same.

These numbers are flawed, however, according to Richwine and Biggs. They show that the typical worker who moves from the private sector into teaching receives a salary increase of 8.8 percent, and the typical teacher who enters the private sector receives a pay cut of 3.1 percent. If teachers were underpaid, they write, "this is the opposite of what one would expect."

They also admit, however, that given the small sample size of workers who switch between teaching and non-teaching, "these data should not be considered precise." It is also probable that a private sector worker who would receive a significant pay cut from becoming a teacher is less likely to fulfill that mid-career calling.

Schools Out For the Summer!

The report further claims that the truncated work year of the average teacher skews the numbers. Teachers receive their salary for an average of nine months of work, which

means their average workweek salary is higher than that of private employees, whose salary is for a full-year of labor.

This argument rehashes a 2007 report by The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, another conservative think tank. That research looked at hourly wages. In weeks teachers worked, they labored apparently for 36.5 hours, and took home \$34.06 for each of those hours, more than architects, psychologists, chemists, mechanical engineers, economists, and reporters. There's just one minor hole in this analysis: Teachers work 36.5 hours a week?

Teachers alleged higher salaries are cushioned by higher job security. The average unemployment rate for public school teachers between 2005 and 2010 was 2.1 percent, the report states, compared to an average of 3.8 percent for workers in similarly skilled occupations. That means less time, on average, job hunting without pay.

Earning Above Their IQ?

Since 2003, the left-leaning Economic Policy Institute has been doing a running study on how much teachers earn compared to other occupations with similar education and work experience, like accountants, reporters, computer programmers and clergy. As of 2010, teachers earned 12 percent less than members of those professions, 9 percent less if you tally in benefits.

The level of education measure obscures some important facts, according to Richwine and Biggs. While a large proportion of teachers have bachelor's or master's degrees, over two thirds have their highest degree in education, which they claim is not a particularly rigorous path of study. You don't have to work as hard and it's easier to score an A in education, supposedly, than in the sciences, social sciences or humanities.

While teachers score above average on national intelligence tests, they allegedly fare worse than other college graduates. Richwine and Biggs therefore conclude that teachers are overpaid, given their average raw intelligence. They get more bucks per IQ point (with IQ determined by the perhaps dubious measure of standardized tests).

But this also suggests that the teaching profession fails to attract and retain the highest skilled college students. So examined through a reverse lens, this could be an argument for even higher salaries.

Retiring In Style

The report also argues that teachers' benefits are more generous than private employees'. On the surface, both teachers and private sector workers receive benefits at about 41 percent of their salaries.

Pensions, however, are financed differently in the public and private sector. The public sector, the researchers claim, invests in risky assets with an approximately 8 percent rate of return. If the investments fall in value, the "public employers -- meaning, ultimately, taxpayers -- must increase their contributions to the pension funds."

If teachers and private employees contribute the same percent of their salaries to their pension funds, teachers will receive retirement benefits 4.5 times higher, according the report, because teachers have a guaranteed higher rate of return.

Richwine and Biggs emphasize that they are talking about the average teacher, not the best ones, and they recommend a pay system that rewards high performing teachers. Merit-based pay raises are already under consideration in Ohio and Florida.

In a statement, the American Federation of Teachers, a union that represents 1.5 million educators, stated that the report "defies common sense." The researchers ignore the fact, the AFT argued, that teachers work long hours outside the classroom grading papers, planning lessons and attending school events. The AFT also stated that teachers spend hundreds of dollars out-of-pocket, buying supplies for their students.

"Does this mean we should go out and arbitrarily cut teacher salaries? No," Biggs said at a briefing. The researchers simply wanted to correct the assumption that teachers were paid below market rates. Trimming benefits, they argue, won't cause a mass exodus of educators.

Modern Warfare' Coming to a CA Community College Near You

by ANNE HYSLOP on NOVEMBER 3, 2011

California Community Colleges have released a draft of policy recommendations to increase student success in the state's two-year colleges (from the cleverly-entitled "Student Success Task Force"). One of the biggest changes is to enrollment policies and priority registration – a major issue given \$800 million in budget cuts over three years and 140,000 students shut out of the system due to lack of classes.

For any fans of the TV show *Community* or anyone fortunate enough to catch the most brilliant half hour of television in the last two years, you are already well-versed in the politics of priority registration, a.k.a the paintball war "prize." But in this case, priority registration isn't going to help Jeff have a six-day weekend or Shirley spend more time with her boys... it's going to help students find and complete an academic pathway without wasting time and accumulating unnecessary amounts of debt.

Currently, California community college students are prioritized in the registration process based on the number of credits they have earned: the more credits you have, the earlier you get to register. As the task force notes, this policy has perverse incentives, emphasizing credit accumulation over sustained progress in a deliberate pathway: "policies that enable students to wander around the curriculum, withdraw and repeat classes multiple times, avoid services that could steer them along a productive pathway, and accumulate an unlimited number of units are a disservice to enrolled students and to those who can't get into the system for lack of available classes." Instead, they propose giving priority to students (currently enrolled and new) that designate and make continual progress towards a career or academic objective – a point Jay Mathews discussed today on his blog.

Now I usually don't dwell in higher ed wonk-land, but with college and career readiness at the top of the K-12 agenda, I've started to pay more attention to the role of community colleges. When most students aren't college- or career-ready (which we have always known anecdotally and are starting to know definitively thanks to better data between high schools and higher ed), community colleges are tasked with helping students shore up their basic skills. Nationwide, nearly 60% of entering community college students need remediation in at least one subject. But of these students, less than a quarter finish their two-year degree within eight years. The task force notes that the first "loss point" for students is failing to complete their basic skills competencies. Clearly, remediation is a major barrier to degree completion. Meanwhile, students accumulate more and more debt as they take additional time to finish their one- or two-year program.

So how can priority registration help? Just look at City College of San Francisco: in 2009, Chancellor Don Griffin let 321 lucky freshman bypass the credit-based registration

process. 74% of these students enrolled in the math courses they needed, and 70% were able to enroll in English. The results were much bleaker for a similar group of freshman without priority – only 22% could enroll in math and 47% in English. The program was so successful (98% of pilot students persisted into their next year), Griffin expanded it to all incoming students from San Francisco public schools.

Priority registration could help students remain focused, keep their debt manageable, and avoid the frustration of taking unnecessary classes. Take the story of Willie Shaw. He enrolled in English and basketball his first semester, but not the math course he needed or the one class he was really excited about – criminal justice. Barely in his first semester, he told the San Francisco Chronicle: “I thought about quitting school two days ago.”

Of course, the task force’s priority registration plan isn’t a slam dunk with everybody. In Community’s ‘Modern Warfare’ episode, the “prize” meant students turning on one another and running around in packs (“the Glee club has lured stragglers into sniper traps with cheery renditions of hit songs!”). In California, the Los Angeles Times headline says it all: “Task force moves toward rationing access to community colleges.”

Rationing is never a popular word, and yes, the policy – just like paintball – will create winners and losers. But in a state that is already rationing access (remember the 140,000 students who couldn’t enroll last year?), the California priority registration proposal aims to ensure that the losing group no longer contains students who have the potential to succeed, but are instead hindered to the point of dropout because they can’t enroll in the classes they need – and want – to take.

Student success plan prompts worries about special services cuts

November 3, 2011 | [Erica Perez](#)

California community college faculty and community members questioned this week whether draft recommendations from a task force aimed at increasing student success could have negative consequences for groups that receive special services, such as English as a Second Language students, CalWORKs recipients and foster care parents.

Representatives from the 20-member Student Success Task Force and the chancellor's office have been canvassing the state to get feedback on a plan they hope will help more students earn degrees or certificates, transfer to four-year universities, and navigate college more successfully.

The task force will present a final set of recommendations to the Board of Governors in December, along with a report to the state Legislature by March 2012. Ultimately, the Board of Governors would have to vote on the recommendations. Some of the proposals would require legislative changes. Others would require additional funding.

On Wednesday, task force member and Merced College President Benjamin Duran joined Chancellor Jack Scott and Executive Vice Chancellor for Programs Erik Skinner at Fresno City College to address a crowd of about 150 people.

One of the report's more controversial recommendations would take eight separate programs that have their own strict funding streams and lump them together into one big, flexible pot. These include programs such as basic skills, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and foster care.

The idea is that this big pot, which would be named the Student Support Initiative, would give colleges the flexibility to target the money on student success strategies that best fit their schools. Colleges wouldn't be required to change how much they fund each of these programs, but they would have more discretion.

But several people in the audience expressed concern that their program would see a reduction in funding as a result.

One foster parent from Fresno said the recommendation could decimate the Foster and Kinship Care Education Program, which provides education and support for foster parents and providers of kinship care – full-time care of children by their relatives or other kin – so that they can meet the special needs of these children.

The colleges now get \$5.2 million in state Proposition 98 funds for the program. That expenditure helps the state draw down federal funds under Title IV-E, and the colleges also receive a chunk of that money for the foster kinship program – about \$5 million.

Sue Shaw, coordinator of the Foster and Kinship Care Education Program at Fresno City College, said she's worried that if the community colleges reduce the amount of money they spend on foster care, the federal government would provide fewer matching funds for the program – doubling the impact of the cuts.

“We’ve heard that around the state on a number of programs,” said Skinner, the executive vice chancellor. “I can assure you that the college presidents on the task force have expressed strongly that foster care programs would be the types of programs that would continue. The assumption that the programs would go away simply because the flexibility was provided was not what was envisioned here.”

But Skinner also acknowledged in an interview that the foster care funds aren't focused on student success. So despite the strong support for them, they could see cuts under this proposal.

"Flexibility will open up the door to directing dollars to other needs and priorities," he said. "Potentially, dollars could be diverted away from this."

Chancellor Scott told Shaw that the change would require legislation and that concerns like hers would come up at legislative committee hearings.

A staffer from one of the colleges' CalWORKs programs had similar worries about whether the colleges could still get federal funding if the local funding is shifted to something else. Task force officials indicated they're aware of that quandary and are trying to sort it out.

Colleges get state CalWORKs funds to provide services like work study, job placement and child care to welfare-recipient students and students who are transitioning off welfare.

Similar to the foster care program, the colleges' expenditures help draw down federal matching dollars for the state's CalWORKs program. Colleges now get about \$27 million in state funds for CalWORKs, plus about \$8 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding.

“We’re looking at the drawdown issue,” said Amy Supinger, executive director of the task force. “We’re not convinced we’re not able to draw down the federal dollars.”

Audience member Hector Duarte, who said he's been working with disadvantaged students for more than 20 years, voiced a more general fear that the recommendation would take the colleges back to the 1960s, before legislation forced the colleges to establish categorical grant programs for disadvantaged groups.

“These programs we talk about were made for a reason, because the system failed,” Duarte said. “We want to keep our doors open to all those in our community. ... Let’s not shut these doors on those students.”

Skinner responded that one of the task force's goals is to shrink the achievement gap between white and minority students at the community colleges. Minority students have lower rates of degree completion, transfer and other success measures.

"The task force has said throughout its deliberation that it does not want to push forward on improving our student success rates at expense of particular populations," Skinner said.

In addition to concerns about categorical programs, task force members heard from English as a Second Language faculty and students concerned that the report would eliminate non-credit ESL classes or would put ESL students at a greater disadvantage.

One of the report's recommendations proposes changing the law to limit state funding for non-credit classes to only those identified as career development or college preparation. The idea was to stop subsidizing recreational classes, such as arts for seniors. But some non-credit ESL courses would be caught in the same net, Skinner said.

Scott indicated that the task force would possibly clarify the recommendations to protect ESL.

"As we've tested these, one or two have unintended consequences we didn't realize," he said. "ESL is one of them. There was no intention of eliminating ESL non-credit courses."

Ruth Luman, an ESL instructor at Modesto Junior College, was more concerned about the impact of recommendations on basic skills education, which includes pre-collegiate English and math, as well as credit ESL classes. The recommendation states that "the time and resources devoted to basic skills instruction need to be balanced with the other missions of the system, namely occupational training, academic preparation, and transfer."

Luman questioned whether that recommendation meant that colleges would prioritize students whose basic skills could be met in a shorter period of time. She said such a move would disadvantage English-language learners. If these students couldn't take credit ESL classes, they would miss out on financial aid, she said.

"Consider the challenges that our ESL students have, not because they are developmental learners, but because they're learning a foreign language," she said. "They need to be given more opportunities than their native-English-speaking counterparts in the community college system. I would like you to try to reconsider some of the recommendations made specifically for ESL students."

Scott urged Luman to submit any concerns about specific recommendations to the task force. "I don't recall any kind of discussion that was in any sense deprecating ESL," he said. "If there's some language that inadvertently has had some bad consequences for ESL students, we encourage you to submit that language."

The task force meets again Nov. 9 in Sacramento to discuss feedback from the statewide meetings, and town halls are scheduled throughout the month.

Inglewood dodges bullet, for now

Class-size waiver lets it avoid \$4 million penalty

Posted on 11/12/11 • Categorized as [State Board of Education](#), [State Budget](#), [Uncategorized](#)

By [John Fensterwald - Educated Guess](#)

[Inglewood Unified](#), which is [struggling against the odds](#) to avoid going under, got momentary relief last week when a divided State Board of Education reluctantly permitted it to exceed the state's limits on class size. The Board's action will spare the district a penalty of between \$3.9 million and \$5 million,* which would have compounded the district's financial problems.

The State Board has been routinely granting waivers to the state's limit of about 30 students per class – it can vary slightly per district for grades 4-8 – as long as a district's teachers don't oppose it. In Inglewood's case, where classes have expanded to 36 children, not only did the teachers oppose [the waiver](#) but the president of the Inglewood Teachers Association delivered two satchels of letters that he said contained 8,000 letters from parents urging a waiver rejection.



Teachers union President Peter Somberg delivered two bags that he said contained 8,000 letters from parents opposed to the waiver. [Click to enlarge.](#) (Fensterwald photo)

“We have obscenely overcrowded classes,” Peter Somberg told the Board. “Don’t further punish kids for the failure of adults.”

Several Board members were sympathetic.

“If I have to err, I do so on the side of the kids,” said Board member Yvonne Chan. “I would be crazy to be principal of a school with everyone united against it [larger class sizes]. Approving it would further lock horns [between teachers and the district] unless they work together.”

But other Board members expressed worry about the impact of an additional multimillion dollar penalty. Asked whether the district can escape insolvency, Deputy Superintendent Richard Zeiger characterized it as “grim.” (Inglewood Superintendent Gary McHenry warned that the district is projected to have a cash deficit of \$21 million by June.) State Board Executive Director Sue Burr said that the penalty would be included in the loan that the state would make.

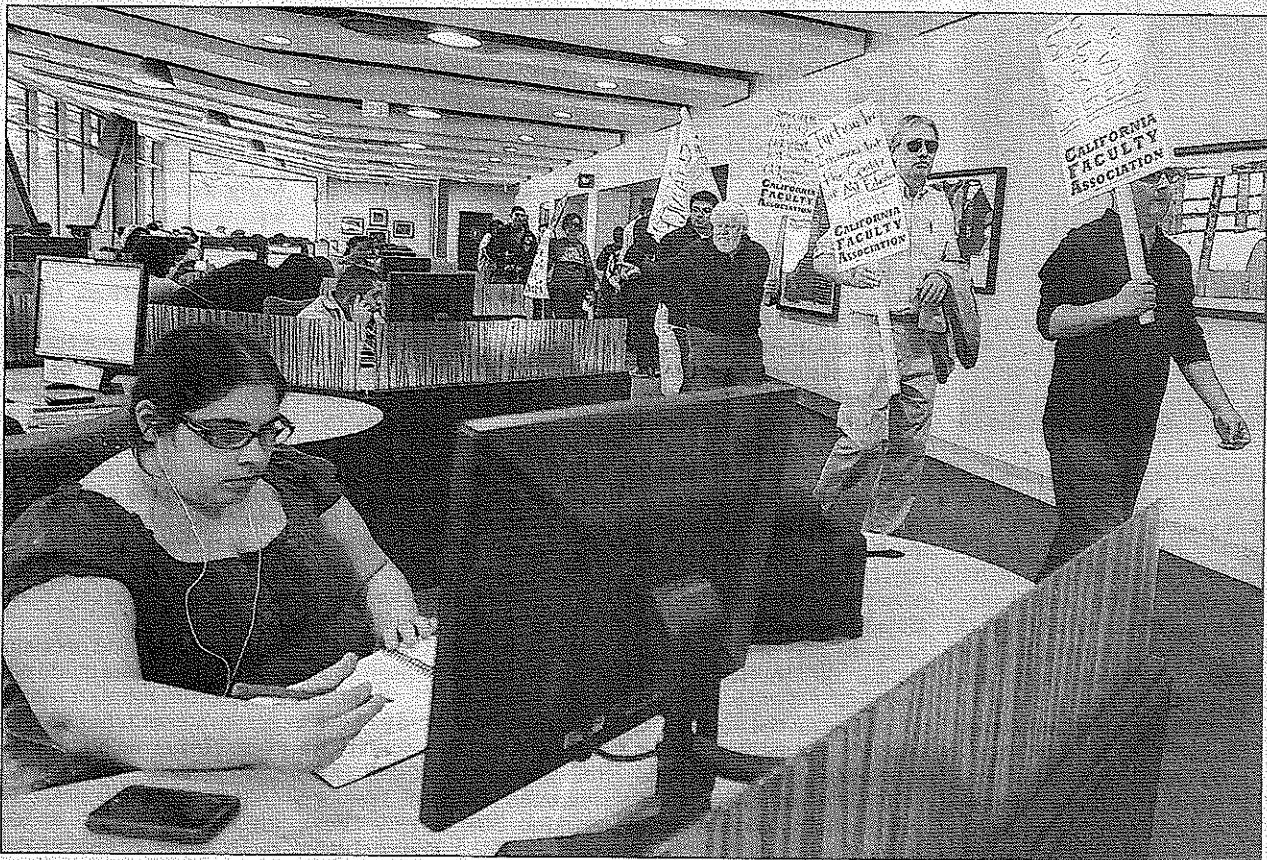
The penalty would be approximately the loss of state tuition for every child beyond the state limit. A \$4 million penalty would be huge for a 12,000-student district.

The Board initially deadlocked 4-4 on a motion to deny a waiver. The Board then voted 6-2 to grant the waiver with a restriction of no more than 36 students per class.

Jeff Good, a California Teachers Association organizer with a child in Inglewood schools, warned the Board that Inglewood, which has lost as many as 1,000 students this year, “had reached a point of no return, and parents are voting with their feet. The district is slipping into chaos, and you are complicit with that.”

Afterward, Good and Somberg said that Inglewood teachers understand the implications of a state loan and administrative takeover of the district, which could lead to further layoffs and pay cuts for workers. But teachers, who had already agreed to 10 furlough days, don’t have confidence in the Board and administration to solve the district’s financial problems, Somberg said, and at this point would just as soon turn management over to an outside trustee.

** The waiver request put the penalty at \$5.2 million; district officials testified the cost would be \$3.9 million*



CHRISTINA HOUSE For The Times

CAMPUS PROTEST

As members of the California Faculty Assn. walk silently through the campus library at Cal State Dominguez Hills during an informational picketing demonstration, students concentrate on their work.

Compton Community College District accepting applications for Special Trustee Advisory Committee Members

THE COMPTON BULLETIN, November 9, 2011

COMPTON—The Compton Community College District is currently accepting applications for the Special Trustee Advisory Committee. Interested applicants may obtain an application beginning Nov. 9 at www.district.compton.edu, or by calling 310-900-1600, Ext. 2000. Applications must be submitted to the Office of the Interim CEO by Dec. 9, at 4:30 p.m.

There will be an information session for potential applicants on Wednesday, Nov. 30 at 6 p.m. in the CCCD Boardroom, 1111 E. Artesia Blvd.

Advisory Committee members will be appointed by interim Special Trustee Thomas Henry. The committee will provide advice and recommendations on matters pertaining to district policy and operations. Members will also promote community awareness of and support for the district's efforts to positively impact quality instruction, fiscal stability, educational mission, and ultimately accreditation.

As outlined in AB 318, the Special Trustee Advisory Committee members will be provided with a wide range of resources to enable them to assist in addressing issues affecting the district. The Special Trustee Advisory Committee will meet a minimum of four times per year. All committee meetings are open to the public.

The Special Trustee's Advisory Committee of the Compton Community College District is organized exclusively to provide advice to the special trustee regarding policy matters that affect the district and its operations; promote community awareness of the district's efforts, focus on quality instruction, educational mission, fiscal stability and, ultimately, accreditation; foster community support for the district.

The Special Trustee Advisory Committee will consist of seven members. Of the seven members, four may be residents of communities served by of the Compton Community College District; one may be a current or former community college educator; and one may be an ECC Compton Center student who is active in the Associated Students' Organization or another recognized student group. Four members will serve a two-year term, while three members will serve a term of one year. No member shall receive compensation or benefits for service on the committee. Members serve at the request of the interim special trustee and may be removed at special trustee's sole discretion.

Applications for consideration are welcome from the business, labor and professional communities; representatives of social service and nonprofit organizations (including churches

and other recognized religious organizations); as well as representatives of civic organizations or taxpayer groups.

District board meetings are usually held the third Tuesday of each month and are open to the public.

Beverly trounces competitor in El Camino College board race

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer Daily Breeze

Posted: 11/08/2011 11:03:52 PM PST

[ELECTION RESULTS](#)

The longtime incumbent in Tuesday's two-way race for a seat on the El Camino College board trounced his challenger, a political neophyte backed by the faculty union.

Bill Beverly's victory over Wendy Doeh is an indication that - at least when it comes to El Camino College - incumbency trumps money.

With all precincts reporting, Beverly garnered 55.3 percent of the vote to Doeh's 44.7 percent.

"I'm pleased," Beverly said past midnight Tuesday. "I guess it means people like what we're doing at El Camino and the way we're doing it."

In a sense, this political duel for one of five board seats of the community college near Torrance was a clean experiment in pitting experience against cash.

That's because Beverly, on the one hand, was the quintessential incumbent - he'd already already served five terms - but on the other hand raised no money. Doeh, meanwhile, received a bundle of cash from the faculty union but was a complete unknown: She even declined to participate in media interviews.

They fought for the Area 3 seat representing the beach cities, though voters in all five districts weighed in. The two other board members whose seats were up, Kenneth Brown (Area 1 in Inglewood) and Mary Combs (Area 2 in the Hawthorne and Lawndale area) ran unopposed.

The race came at an exceptionally sensitive time for the Torrance-area community college, which has not only been hobbled by the lousy economy - it is serving about 6,000 fewer students than five years ago - but also is embroiled in a rancorous round of contract talks between faculty and administration.

On some counts, the nature of the race is a reflection of the labor strife. The faculty union, officially known as the El Camino College Federation of Teachers, pumped \$20,000 into Doeh's campaign largely as a vote against Beverly, 61, who is seen by the union leadership as being too cozy with the administration.

However, Beverly boasted the support of the president of the classified union - which includes custodians, clerical staff and maintenance workers - though not the entire union.

Beverly received no money from the union or any other supporters, and said he opted not to seek donations.

Doeh, 75, spent considerable time and money calling attention to a blemish on Beverly's record: A lawyer, he had his law license suspended for three months in 2010 for "constructive fraud."

But spotlighting this ordeal was apparently not enough to override Beverly's two decades of experience on the board.

Beverly, the son of the late Sen. Bob Beverly, was first appointed to the post in 1991, and has been re-elected every term since. (About half have been contested.)

He said he wants to serve just four more years to see a number of projects get closer to conclusion. These include El Camino's controversial decision to adopt Compton College after it was shut down; the construction on campus - now about half done - as the result of a \$440 million bond measure; and redrawing the boundaries of the district to improve voter equity.

A father of three and a lifetime resident of Manhattan Beach, Beverly spends much of his spare time playing pedal steel guitar.

El Camino reaches tentative agreement with classified union

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer Daily Breeze

Posted: 11/10/2011

The classified union and administration at El Camino College have reached a tentative agreement on a new contract, even as negotiations with the faculty union are headed toward a boiling point.

The administration announced the agreement last week, but the pact still needs to be ratified by the classified union, which represents employees such as clerks, custodians and technicians. The union members will vote on Dec. 2.

The contract includes no salary or cost-of-living increases, but employees will receive step-and-column pay adjustments, said El Camino spokeswoman Ann Garten. On health benefits, the biggest change involves the most expensive of three PPO options: the employees would have to contribute to the plan. The college district would still pick up the entire cost for all other health plans.

Meanwhile, the faculty union and administration have been deadlocked for nearly five months. The union president has even said she is nearing the point of calling for a strike. On Nov. 4, both sides received a report from an independent fact-finder. The parties have two weeks to review the report, and then will try to reach an agreement. It is the final step in what has been a grueling bargaining process.

Dan Walters: California school advocates talk more dollars than sense

Published: Sunday, Nov. 13, 2011 - 12:00 am | Page 3A

Last Modified: Sunday, Nov. 13, 2011 - 10:04 am

It's unfortunate – but nevertheless political reality – that the Capitol almost never moves beyond money in its perpetual debate over how our 6 million-plus public school students should be educated.

While money is certainly important, it's just as certainly not the only factor, and likely not even the most important one, in how well students fare.

Family engagement, language barriers, popular culture, peer pressure and quality of teaching all contribute to, or subtract from, outcomes that are, according to the latest national academic tests, among the nation's worst.

The California Budget Project, a liberal group that advocates for more spending, continues the money obsession with a new report contending that public education is being woefully underfinanced.

The CBP calls it "a decade of disinvestment" that has "left public systems and programs ill-equipped to cope with the ongoing impact of the Great Recession and the challenges of a growing population and an ever-more-competitive global economy."

The report, citing data from the National Education Association and federal agencies, declares that California is 46th among the states in per-pupil spending at \$8,908 per year, nearly \$3,000 under the national average; 47th in school spending as a percentage of personal income; 50th in the number of students per teacher, and so forth.

It's a selective array of data, perhaps chosen to support a proposed tax increase for schools. It does not, for example, include the fact that California teachers are very nearly the highest paid in the nation.

Moreover, it paints a much darker picture than data from other sources. The Census Bureau, for instance, surveys all forms of school spending and pegs California's per-pupil number at \$11,588, just \$662 under the national average and 27th highest in the nation, not 46th.

And it's much higher in some big-city school systems, such as Los Angeles Unified, which has more than 600,000 students, spends \$14,100 per pupil, and has about a 50 percent high school dropout rate.

But even assuming the CBP's numbers are valid, it misses a more important point. California's state-local tax burden is one of the nation's highest, so if schools are being shortchanged, it's a political choice, not necessarily an overall lack of money.

We – as voters or through those we elect – chose to have the nation's most expensive prison system, costing at least \$5 billion more a year than it should, which would equate to \$800 per public school pupil.

We chose, with 12 percent of the nation's population, to have nearly a third of its welfare caseload, to have the nation's lowest community college fees, and to have a very expensive public pension system.

So if we want to spend more money on schools and less elsewhere, that's also a choice.

ECC Veterans Center opens Tuesday

Daily Breeze

From staff reports

Posted: 11/14/2011

EL CAMINO COLLEGE

Veterans Center opens Tuesday: El Camino College will host a grand opening for the new Veterans Center at 1 p.m. Tuesday in the Student Activities Center, East Lounge.

The program will include remarks from student veteran Scott Hookey and the keynote address will be delivered by one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, Lt. Col. Robert Friend, a member of the elite World War II African American Red Tail Squadron. The celebration will close with a tour and the unveiling of artwork donated to the Veterans Center.

Equipped with computers, a couch and workspace, the new Veterans Center is designed to be a gathering place for El Camino College student veterans so they may study, get to know one another, and have a place of their own to hang out between classes.

"The new Veterans Center is beautiful - it offers a great place to get things done and also to just relax," said Dwayne Taylor, a recently retired 25-year Army infantryman who was injured during a tour in the Sinai Peninsula. After retiring and while recovering from his injuries, he enrolled at El Camino College to train for a career in refrigeration. He is nearly finished with his classes, and now has a certificate, license and a job lined up in his new profession.

Support services available at the center include access to computer assistance, workshops, and referrals to a variety of resources, both at the college and in the community. Staff can help students with paperwork regarding their educational benefits, as well as assist them in becoming successful in the college environment

Wednesday's Letters to the Editor

THE DAILY BREEZE

Posted: 11/15/2011 04:41:34 PM PST

Updated: 11/15/2011 05:26:44 PM PST

http://www.dailybreeze.com/ci_19342425

El Camino teachers respond

When I read the letter by El Camino College Board of Trustees President Bill Beverly ("El Camino story got it wrong," Thursday), the thought crossed my mind, "Is this the same El Camino where I have taught for over 40 years?" Hardly!

Beverly claims that El Camino faces a \$7million budgeted deficit for this year. As a 20-year member of the district's budget committee, I can say that is true, but what he conveniently omits is that the district's vice president of administrative services projects \$3 million to \$4 million in additional revenues this year as well. Does the remaining \$3 million to \$4 million projected shortfall qualify El Camino for the poorhouse? Hardly! El Camino sits on a more than \$20 million "rainy day" fund that could carry the district for several years with very little pain. At the same time, it is raining like crazy on students who can't find the classes they need or the services they require to succeed.

El Camino is a fine institution where I genuinely enjoy teaching. However, it is not the picture of Nirvana conveyed by Beverly in his letter, nor are faculty, staff and students supremely blessed by the enlightened leadership of top management. Hardly! If the real world was only that simple and benign.

- Lance Widman

Political science professor

El Camino College

William Beverly's claim that faculty "will continue to receive salary increases in the coming year" is false, as is his contention that faculty "can make well over \$100,000 a year." Many faculty members have received no salary increases for years and will not be receiving one next year, whereas top administrators have benefited from enormous increases (as high as 38 percent). ECC is spending over half a million dollars more for our president's and vice presidents' salaries than we did in 2006, dollars that could restore 100 class sections.

Only professors with doctorates and 28-plus years of teaching experience earn \$100,000.

Most faculty at ECC hold masters degrees; with four years of teaching experience, they earn \$59,426, and with 19 years, \$78,862.

Not too long ago, when ECC had thousands more students and far more part-time faculty (who have since been laid off), ECC had two vice presidents; now there are five. One position, director of human resources, has morphed into four: two VPs of human resources, an assistant to the VP of human resources and a director of human resources. Compton Center has its own dean of human resources.

Contrast this mushrooming of top-level management with the dwindling numbers of part-time faculty (who earn less than \$25,000 a year, with no health insurance benefits, to teach half of a full-time course load), the slashing of hundreds of class sections, and professors, with miniscule or no salary increases in years, adding 10 to 15 percent more students over the cap into their classes (essentially a pay cut), and the clear picture emerges: ECC students do not have access to the courses and services needed to attain their goals, while the board has chosen to increase top administrators' salaries and positions instead of utilizing a prudent amount of the large (\$20-plus million) to meet our community's needs.

- Mary Ann Leiby
English professor
El Camino College

As a long-standing, and voting, member of El Camino College's Insurance Benefits Committee I am well informed on our health benefits, and as a professor of mathematics I understand numbers and their implications. ECC employees can choose from three PPO plans, what William Beverly refers to as "a private doctor plan," and it is not a minority of teachers who prefer one of these plans.

In fact, it is a majority of teachers, and a majority of managers, deans and administrators, as well as many classified employees, who prefer one of these plans. With respect to the cost of these plans, two of the three plans are less expensive than some of the HMO plans.

The third plan, the one that Beverly refers to as the "Cadillac insurance plan," was the subject of an emergency meeting of the benefits committee last June. Faculty, staff and police officers requested the meeting and proposed a plan that would have completely eliminated any costs to the college for that plan for at least two years. The president's six appointees unanimously voted down the proposal.

Finally, Beverly's claim that the district requested "a small number of counselors" to work 10 months, is a claim I am still struggling to try to understand. Very simply the reality, the fact, is that 100 percent of the full-time tenured faculty that work as counselors are being asked to move from a 12 month contract to a 10-month contract. I feel ashamed when I see our students waiting to get a counselor appointment in lines that stretch far into the campus quad. Such a change will likely result in the district asking the same counselors, those who would move from a 12-month contract to a 10-month

contract, to make up the lost two months of work but at a greatly reduced overload pay rate.

- Jeffrey Cohen
Mathematics professor
El Camino College

COMMENTS:

[Molli Rasor](#) · Top Commenter · [Uc santa cruz](#)

I'd find real numbers published continually on the schools web site, with links from the Daily Breeze and other publications to be a lot more persuasive than the teacher's letters. Figures don't lie, but liars sure figure.

EVERY public agency should publish up to date compensation information. Failure to do so or falsification of such publications should be a felony with mandatory prison time for everyone in the chain of command.

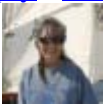
[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · [21 minutes ago](#)



[Russell Jeans](#) · Top Commenter · [San Pedro, California](#)

I'm not familiar with every health plan offered in the public sector, but I have yet to see a PPO plan cheaper than a HMO. My employer sets a premium amount paid by the employer and if the employee opts for a more expensive PPO the difference in premium is paid by the employee. The way I read the issue here, I wonder why the school doesn't use that strategy.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · [8 minutes ago](#)



[Bev Morse](#) · Top Commenter · [Yes, several](#)

re recently re-elected bill beverly: what a shame we didn't listen harder to his ONLY opponent !!! helloooo....?

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Occupation Fatigue

Inside Higher Ed

November 17, 2011 - 3:00am

By Paul Fain

Move over Berkeley and Harvard; Seattle Central Community College has become an increasingly high-profile and tense campus home for the Occupy movement.

Occupy Seattle has declared its solidarity with the cash-strapped Seattle Central. But administrators tried to warn off protesters even before they arrived on Oct. 30. Animosity has grown since then. A college spokeswoman says the tent city's presence on campus is a health and safety hazard, as well as disruptive to students and expensive for the college.

Occupiers have disputed those charges, and local news media have pounced on the growing spat. Faculty union leaders have also challenged the administration's claims, and are staging teach-ins for protesters.

The protest has even welcomed an academic celebrity, with a surprise speaking appearance by Cornel West on Wednesday afternoon.

What happens next is unclear. State laws don't allow the college to evict Occupy Seattle, which is focused on broad economic issues and not the management of the college. But administrators have reportedly discussed their options with the attorney general's office.

At first glimpse, a community college doesn't seem an ideal location for a movement trying to shame the 1 percent into caring about everyone else. Even student debt, a hot issue for occupiers, is more relevant for protests on or near campuses that charge far more than Seattle Central, where a 12-credit per semester course load costs \$2,100 a year.

But, as its name implies, the college is a good location for Occupy Seattle. And the campus has a long history as a gathering spot for marches. This time, however, the protesters aren't marching off -- county health inspectors counted an estimated 150 protesters, 12 "large dogs" and 60 tents or other erected structures during a recent site visit, according to Judy Kitzman, a college spokeswoman.

The occupation is centered on a lawn area on the college's south plaza. Kitzman said the space is 2,000 square feet, which is tight for a group of that size.

"They're building temporary structures out there," she said, adding that "the encampment literally abuts our outdoor child care facility."

Kitzman said workers at the child care center have spotted protesters using drugs. The college put tarps over a fence between the facility and the camping area, but Kitzman said

protesters tore some of the tarps down to use in their makeshift shelters. Now she said children are restricted to staying inside during their recess periods.

The college has blamed Occupy Seattle for other campus problems, including clean-up costs for restrooms, increased security and female students' claims of sexual harassment by protesters. Kitzman said the college is receiving at least one complaint per day about the occupation, like one recent call from a parent worried about a female student's safety. She also said the number of rats on campus has increased, because of protesters' food and trash.

"This is obviously straining our resources," Kitzman said.

In a written statement, Occupy Seattle said its members had not vandalized bathrooms and were not the source of drug paraphernalia on campus.

"Occupy Seattle understands the deep funding cuts facing the school, in fact our work is focused on changing the economic inequity in this state so that schools are adequately funded," the statement said. "We are committed to being respectful of the school and the community and look forward to continuing what we thought was a good working relationship to address all concerns."

Two professors, who are also faculty union leaders, said the college was exaggerating the mess, or at least failing to prove that protesters were behind common nuisances on the urban campus, where drugs and mentally unstable passerby are hardly rare.

The union has also supported the protest's overall goals, and has brought cupcakes, bread and roses to occupiers. Faculty have staged teach-ins, including an all-night event when Occupy Seattle first arrived.

Sandra Schroeder, president of the Washington State chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, has taught English at the college since 1979. She said faculty members were worried about some of the problems the protest might be causing on campus. For one thing, Schroeder said she's sure the college is spending more money than it can afford because of the occupation.

However, Schroeder said some of the complaints by campus administrators have led to biased reporting about the protest.

"Like all of the Occupy sites, the organizers are struggling with how to deal with the unfortunates of the city who end up attracted to a place where they might be able to get food and companionship," she said via e-mail. "But Seattle Central is also a place where it would not be at all unusual to have the soap stolen from a bathroom. And anyone who works at Central, if honest, will tell you they have had rats on campus forever."

Free Teach-Ins

Some local news media reports have claimed that the college's AFT chapter invited the protest to campus. However, Karen Strickland, president of the AFT Seattle Community Colleges (the district includes three colleges), disputed that claim.

"We did not invite them," Strickland said. Besides, "it would be somewhat counter to Occupy Seattle to wait for an invitation."

Late last month, the protest's leaders began considering a move from their location at Westlake Park, in downtown Seattle. The occupation had several publicized scrapes with police there, and decided to move about a mile to Seattle Central.

The college issued an "open letter" to the protest on Oct. 26, which stated that "camping on college property is prohibited for all individuals and groups. If this rule is violated, the college may choose to impose its own sanctions, including criminal or civil prosecution."

But the prohibition on camping wasn't so simple. Kitzman said while district policy does not allow camping, the college discovered later that Washington State codes prevent the expulsion of campers from college property.

Paul T. Killpatrick, the college's president, later met with both union and protest leaders. He said in a statement issued to faculty on Oct. 28 that he remained "strongly opposed" to an encampment, and that the college would have to cover any additional expenses related to the protest, which it could ill afford.

"That imposition comes at a high cost for the college and our students," Killpatrick said, "as we are already struggling with declining state funds."

Killpatrick and other administrators have met with protest leaders and faculty union representatives every Tuesday since the campus occupation began. The meeting this week was canceled, however, due to scheduling problems for college officials, Kitzman said. But some protesters interpreted the cancellation as a sign that the college was breaking off relations with them, which Kitzman said is not the case.

Strickland gives nuanced answers when asked about the college's response to the protest. She said some occupiers had visibly used illegal drugs, and that there was resistance to the protest among certain students. Others, she said, have joined the rally.

The teach-ins, however, have been a success, Strickland said. During the all-night lecture, professors gave presentations about calligraphy and the art of protest signs, labor history, how to film demonstrations and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Another lecture is scheduled for today, she said.

Strickland thinks the college will try to evict the protesters, perhaps citing fire code violations they presented to her and occupiers at a meeting last week. And a confrontation now seems more likely.

"Things have escalated," she said.

CSU faculty's demands overlook students' plight

The Daily Breeze Editorial

Posted: 11/16/2011 05:27:17 PM PST

The faculty of the 23 California State University campuses has a legitimate beef about the unequal treatment of the system's executives and its ranks of hard-working educators.

While executive compensation has ballooned to sometimes unseemly levels, faculty have been furloughed the equivalent of 10percent of their pay and seen their salaries stagnate.

A recent - and outrageous - example occurred earlier this year when the CSU Board of Trustees approved a \$400,000 annual salary for the new president of San Diego State University, Elliot Hirshman. That is more than \$100,000 more than the outgoing president received. By contrast, about half of the CSU faculty earns less than \$60,000 a year.

The executive raises would raise eyeballs at any time. But when the CSU has been plagued by years of budget cuts, and student fees have risen every year by significant amounts while course offerings have shrunk, it's offensive. Not quite as off-putting as the AIG executives who used thousands of their government bailout money to party at an Orange County resort during the early days of the economic downturn. But bad enough.

The disparity between executive pay and faculty pay is at the heart of the plan by CSU faculty to stage one-day strikes today at CSU Dominguez Hills in Carson and CSU East Bay in Northern California. Those two campuses were chosen for the action because of their symbolic importance as campuses with high concentrations of working-class students. The faculty is in contract negotiations and seeking "equity" raises for the lowest-paid, a cost of about \$20 million right away, and \$10million each year.

While the educators' outrage deserves sympathy, their demands do not. Not when the university is going to raise student fees again next year to deal with more budget cuts by Sacramento. We agree that executive pay is out of line with the economic state of the CSUs; but the faculty's solution - to pay the faculty more as well - is hard to fathom.

This is lost on Lillian Taiz, the president of the California Faculty Association and history professor at Cal State Los Angeles. She insists students, many of whom staged their own protest Wednesday at CSU headquarters in Long Beach to protest the latest fee increase, support faculty raises.

It's hard to believe that the working-class students at Dominguez Hills could get passionate about backing a raise for some middle-class professors - people who already have well-paying jobs - when they are about to get hit with a larger education bill and no guarantee of employment. CSU trustees voted Wednesday to raise fees next year by 9 percent, or \$498 a year for full-time undergraduate students. That's on top of a 20 percent fee increase in the past year.

"This is not about money; it's about priorities," Taiz said earlier this week.

She's right. And the CFA's priorities seem to be out of line with both the needs of students and the state's economic picture.

Big midyear hit for Prop 98 likely

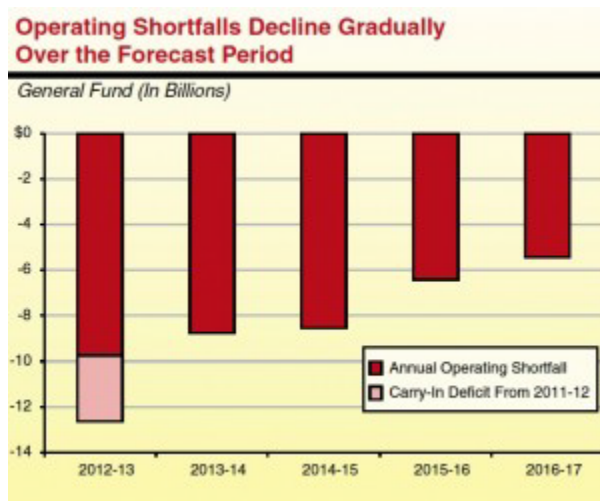
LAO foresees \$3.7 billion state shortfall

Posted on 11/17/11 • Categorized as [Revenue and taxes](#), [State Budget](#)

By [John Fensterwald - Educated Guess](#)

The first shoe fell with a thud Wednesday, when the [Legislative Analyst's Office predicted](#) that a \$3.7 billion state revenue shortfall this year would result in \$2 billion in midyear “trigger” cuts, including \$1.5 billion in Proposition 98 funding and \$100 million each to the University of California and California State University.

The other shoe will drop next month when the state Dept. of Finance issues its own revenue estimates and then sets the midyear cuts based on the rosier of the two projections.



The LAO is predicting a \$13 billion state deficit next year, even after \$2 billion in midyear cuts this year, declining gradually over five years. [Click to enlarge.](#)

The expected cuts, which will bite into services for the disabled as well, follow dreary revenue reports for the first four months of the fiscal year, and so should come as no shock. The repercussions were felt immediately Wednesday, with CSU trustees approving a 9 percent tuition increase for next year unless the state increases funding by at least \$138 million next year. The \$100 million midyear cut will put CSU that much more in a hole and wipe out the system's reserves.

Under the budget passed last year, the shortfall also will lead to a \$10 per credit community college fee increase, and will compound problems for K-12 districts, especially those that, hoping against hope, didn't build in sufficient reserves or don't have contingencies for negotiating additional staff furlough days this spring. Under the worst-case scenario, some of

those districts, the LAO said, may run right out of cash by year-end and have to seek a state emergency loan.

The \$1.5 billion in Prop 98 cuts would include the \$248 million in home and school transportation payments – more than half of funding for the program – and \$1.1 billion in standard revenue limit funding for districts. The latter equals a cut of \$180 per student, about 3 percent of state tuition payments.

The transportation cuts, an average of \$41.60 per student, will disproportionately affect rural and poor urban students, according to a breakdown by Stephen Rhoads, a lobbyist with Strategic Education Services in Sacramento. In rural Humboldt County, the cut amounts to \$113 per student; in Mariposa County, \$346 per student; for low-income students, the cut would average \$49 per child, compared with \$23 in wealthier districts. If students stop attending school regularly after bus routes are cut, districts would see a further erosion in revenue.

The Legislature made contingencies for cuts when it shifted \$2 billion in sales tax revenue from Prop 98 to pay for transferring prisoners to county and local jails. Rather than immediately cut education, the Legislature assumed that the state would take in an extra \$4 billion in revenue – a deal it cut with the California Teachers Association that in the end turned sour.

CTA President Dean Vogel, commenting on the LAO report, called for fixing the state's "unfair tax structure and corporate tax breaks" in order not to shortchange education.

"It's time to put a fair and equitable tax system in place so that our students and the most vulnerable Californians don't have to continue to do without," he said.

Looking ahead to a sluggish economy and an unemployment rate that will likely remain above 8 percent for another five years, the LAO assumes that the midyear cuts won't be restored for years. Even with the midyear cuts, the LAO is predicting that the state will end this year \$3 billion in the red, and the deficit will grow to \$13 billion next year, and will remain above \$5 billion per year through 2016-17.

If there's good news for schools, it's in the LAO's projection that the funding obligation for K-12 and community colleges will rise \$4 billion next year. But more than half of that will be simply part of what the state owes the schools: restoring Prop 98 to the level before the \$2 billion in sales tax money was diverted and then partially repaying for the lost \$2 billion this year (\$400 million per year for five years).

With unemployment beginning to drop next year, per capita income will rise 4 percent, resulting in an increase of nearly \$1 billion in the Prop 98 obligation. But, with the Prop 98 increase contributing to the \$13 billion deficit, the LAO suggested that the Legislature would have to consider suspending Prop 98 – and how to do it.

It added two more cautionary notes: Even though an upsurge in revenue may enable the state to fund Prop 98 an average of \$2.5 billion a year beyond the minimum guarantee from 2013-14 to 2016-17, it will still end up owing education \$10 billion in past obligations. And it will not have begun to pay down CalSTRS' unfunded pension liability. "Addressing the unfunded liabilities of just the teachers' retirement fund probably will require billions of dollars of additional payments annually over the coming decades," the report said.



Capital Notes

A glimpse of the policies, people, and politics of California state government

A glimpse of the policies, people, and politics of California state government, from John Myers of The California Report

« **LAO Predicts Trigger Pulled On Budget Cuts**

Don't Cut Higher Ed. And Don't Ask Me to Pay More!

November 16, 2011, 9:10 pm • Posted by **John Myers**

Say what you will about Californians, but when it comes to their desires and demands about government services, they are consistently inconsistent.

A newly released statewide poll shows that while large majorities of residents are angry... even downright depressed... about the funding of public colleges and universities, most are unwilling to pay any additional taxes to solve the problem.

The new survey from the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California finds a whopping 74% of respondents, across all political persuasions, believe that not enough is now being spent on higher education. And 62% say that after several years of deep cuts in higher ed -- capped off by a \$1.5 billion cut this past year -- California's once praised colleges and universities are headed in the wrong direction.

But what to do? Here's how the PPIC puts it:

Despite Californians' worries about the fiscal situation in higher education, 52 percent of residents are unwilling to pay higher taxes to maintain current funding, while 45 percent would do so. Likely voters are divided (49% yes, 49% no). Most Democrats (63%) would pay higher taxes, while most independents (55%) and Republicans (71%) would not.

This isn't the first time that a poll's found voters demanding more spending without paying more in taxes. Quite the contrary: that contradiction, even when additional tax dollars are generally seen as necessary, has appeared in major polls for several years running.

But what's especially puzzling about this survey is how many of those polled say the community college, CSU, and UC systems are a "high" or "very high" priority -- 70% -- but how few would pay additional dollars to maintain even *current* funding.

So how should state lawmakers maintain current funding or even increase it to the levels of a few years ago?

Increase student fees? 69% say no.

Admit more out-of-state students who pay higher tuition? 52% say yes... unless it means fewer slots for in-state kids, in which case only 20% say yes.

Only finding money for higher ed construction projects through selling bonds (borrowing) finds majority support, with 58% of those polled approving.

Critics of additional taxes will no doubt say that there are other places in the state budget to save money and redirect it to higher education; even Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** pretty much solidified that notion in his 2010 trial balloon idea to link higher ed and prison spending.

The poll also seems to suggest a slight skepticism from the public about how colleges and universities are spending their existing dollars. PPIC finds a 10% drop in approval for CSU and 8% for UC since the question was last asked in 2007. And 65% of those polled express concern about recent tuition hikes enacted in response to state budget cuts, which today's news is only likely to exacerbate.

Reality vs \$ at community colleges

Student Success Task Force gets an earful

Posted on 11/17/11 • Categorized as [Community Colleges](#), [State Budget](#)

By [Kathryn Baron](#)

One of the dominant issues at the fourth and final town hall meeting on how to improve the state's community colleges wasn't even in the 70 pages of recommendations from the Task Force on Student Success.

“There was some eloquent testimony today that we need more funding,” Community College Chancellor Jack Scott told the 200 or so people who turned out yesterday for the public hearing in Oakland. “I want you to understand that we know we are underfunded.”



California Community College Chancellor Jack Scott delivers opening remarks at town hall meeting in Oakland. (Source: Town Hall video)

Like all public education in California, community colleges have been taking it on the chin at budget time. They had an 8 percent cut two years ago, and another 5 percent this year. If revenues don't pick up and the trigger gets pulled, they're funding could drop \$100 million more in the middle of this academic year, while student tuition will increase next fall. (For more on the revenue outlook, see John Fensterwald's [article today](#)).

So when the task force was established by the state legislature in 2010 through [SB 1143](#), it was charged with finding ways to improve student success without spending any more money. After months of meetings, the committee came up with 22 [draft recommendations](#) aimed at boosting graduation and transfer rates by strengthening support for new students, putting more emphasis on completing remedial classes and tying student's Board of Governors fee waivers to their progress toward earning a degree or certificate, or transferring to a four-year college.

At a time when the Occupy movements are emboldening college students and some of their professors to question the economic status quo, the task force solutions seemed to evade the critical issue for many people at the hearing. A few sat quietly holding handwritten signs reading, “It’s a tax problem, not a CCC problem.” Others waited for their turn at the microphone.

“My question is really about priorities,” said Jeffrey Michels, an English professor at Contra Costa College and president of his district’s union. Michels admonished the panel for not having enough teachers involved, and said they would have come up with very different solutions based on first-hand knowledge of what would improve student success.

“We would answer that we need more full-time faculty. We would talk about professionalizing part-time faculty. Part-timers need offices and telephones, paid office hours where students can actually reach them. That’s nowhere in here,” said Michels, holding up a copy of the task force recommendations. The audience cheered him.

Squeezed for time

Others raised concerns that the timeline for approving the recommendations isn’t long enough to allow a careful review that might uncover inconsistencies and potential problems down the road. That troubled Emily Kinner, a student trustee at De Anza College in Cupertino, an president of the California Community College Association of Student Trustees.



Jeffrey Michels is an English professor at Contra Costa College and president of United Faculty of the Contra Costa Community College District. (source: Town Hall video).

“I don’t see a lot of cohesiveness,” Kinner told the panel, highlighting proposals in chapters two and three as examples. The former requires students to develop an education plan containing the courses they need to complete community college, while the latter bars fee waivers from going to students who have more than 110 units, an indication, according to the task force, that the student isn’t serious about finishing college.



Emily Kinner, student trustee at the Foothill-De Anza Community College District at Student Success Task Force Town Hall in Oakland. (Source: Town Hall video).

But that doesn't address the issue of why students are taking so many units, said Kinner, explaining that it can be a vicious circle and a contradiction. To be eligible for some financial aid, students need to be enrolled full time. But so many classes have been eliminated due to budget cuts, that some low-income students end up taking courses they don't need while waiting a semester or more to get into those they need.

“What happens to the students who do everything right, but they're capped out on units?” Kinner asked the panel. “Then they're being penalized.” There are exemptions built into the proposals, but Kinner isn't convinced that college administrations move fast enough to help students in a timely fashion. (Go [here](#) for an article on the lengths some students will go in order to get the classes they need, and [here](#) for a public radio report on the issue).

The process moves into high gear from now on. The Student Success Task Force holds its final meeting on December 7th, then the draft report goes to the community college Board of Governors, which is scheduled to vote on the recommendations at its January meeting. The state legislature is expecting a final report in March.

Before the hearing ended, Chancellor Scott returned to the issue of funding and reiterated that even though there's no additional money to improve student success, “we can't fold our arms and say we can't do anything.” Nevertheless, he appealed to community college supporters not to let the legislature off so easily, especially when they're raising the prison budget at the same time they're cutting education. Lawmakers, he said, are “more interested in putting stripes on people than graduation gowns.”

What the latest survey of Californians on higher education didn't ask: a lot

Posted on 11/20/11 • Categorized as [UC Board of Regents](#), [UC and CSU](#)

By [Peter Schrag](#)

The most interesting things about the latest survey of Californians' views about the state's system of higher education are the issues it didn't address.

The survey, conducted by PPIC (the Public Policy Institute of California) and released last week, found – again – that a great majority of us believed that the state was underfunding its public colleges and universities. But – again, again – it also found that we weren't willing to pay higher taxes or approve of higher tuition to make up for it. So what else is new?

Community college fees remain low

PPIC pollsters didn't make clear to those it questioned that while all the attention was going to the rising tuition at the University of California and the California State University (CSU), fees at the state's community colleges, though also rising, are still the lowest in the country and that low-income students get waivers for all fees. It made no distinction among the tuition and fees charged by the three segments.

If tuition at the two-year institutions were higher, a great many students would be eligible for federal grants or tax write-offs they can't get now. In effect, the state's low tuition policy is costing California many millions in federal money.

It didn't ask whether Californians agreed with the protesting students and university employees at UC and CSU that university administrators were overpaid and over-perked. It didn't ask whether in a time of fiscal crisis, professors at the University of California should be asked to carry heavier teaching loads than they do now. It didn't address the dismally low student completion rate at the community colleges.

The survey asked whether respondents were "concerned" about the "overall quality" of education in each of the three segments of the state's higher education system – they say they are – but gave no indication of whether that was just an expression of general grumpiness, like people's views that the system was going in "the wrong direction," or whether it pointed to anything specific.

Polls do disservice to a larger dialogue

There are a great many issues in higher education, as in many other things, which can't be addressed in an opinion survey. But poll reports on a narrow range of questions, many of them getting predictable responses, also have the unfortunate effect of narrowing both media coverage and the general understanding of, and conversation about, difficult issues.

On higher education, the list of major issues, debates, and questions becomes increasingly crucial for people who seem to agree that, as one of them said, "the University's funding from the state will not recover in the foreseeable future. UC will be lucky to hold on to the number of dollars that it now receives."

So there's increasing interest, among other things, in modifying the 50-year-old Master Plan, whose guarantee of low fees is already a dead letter, and perhaps scrapping it altogether.

Among the ideas: Decentralize UC, reducing the scope and functions of the central administration and devolving more authority and accountability to the campuses – possibly even abolishing the regents altogether and putting each campus under its own board of trustees. Although it's a proposal that's been kicking around for years, it creates the danger of ten market-driven enterprises jockeying for student-customers and, abetted by local promoters and legislators, fiercely lobbying Sacramento for more regional pork. It's already done now, but it could get worse.

Decentralize UC funding?

Some thoughtful people have also proposed that a much larger share of state funding go directly to students – and much less directly to the institutions – in the form of financial aid. That would obviously give the students-cum-clients more clout and force the institutions to be more responsive to their wishes. But it could easily also bring the marketing culture that already dominates much of higher education – the fancy gyms and student unions, the pandering to students who regard themselves as customers – to UC.

But the rigid Berkeley model for UC, endlessly trying to replicate Berkeley or UCLA in creating still more research universities and pinning each campus into the same institutional formula with roughly the same faculty pay and student tuition scales and academic programs, may be both financially unsustainable and educationally stultifying. High-quality education is available at countless colleges that are not research universities.

Equally important – and consistent with the proposals for decentralization – are growing calls for regional compacts among the local UC campus, two or the three CSU campuses, and as many as 10 or more community colleges: agreements to offer common courses in the first two years and give common academic credit wherever the student eventually chooses to go.

The ongoing unwillingness of some four-year universities, UC especially, to recognize community college courses with the same name and catalog description as their own courses and the general inconsistency in courses among the three segments is a frustrating impediment to countless students and an indefensible barrier to their ability to get a four-year degree. Creating common courses with all the resources that modern technology makes available would not just help overcome those barriers but lead to more efficient use of resources. It might even make for better courses.

Not all those issues can be addressed in opinion surveys. But there are all manner of other ways they can be raised and the public discussion broadened. This survey did just the opposite.

This column also appeared in today's California Progress Report (californiaprogressreport.com). Peter Schrag is the former editorial page editor and columnist of the Sacramento Bee. He is the author of "Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future" and "California: America's High Stakes Experiment." His latest book is "Not Fit for Our Society: Immigration and Nativism in America" (University of California Press). He is a frequent contributor to the California Progress Report, and is a member of the TOP-Ed advisory board

Revising Research

Inside Higher Ed

November 21, 2011 - 3:00am

By Kevin Kiley

WASHINGTON -- Maybe universities aren't using English professors' time in the ways they should.

In a paper released Friday, the Emory University English professor Mark Bauerlein argued that the way universities structure the workload of faculty members who teach and do research about literature is inefficient. Because faculty members spend so much time writing papers and books, and because so few of those pieces are cited by other literature scholars, Bauerlein argues that universities would be better suited by employing literary researchers in different pursuits.

"Many professors enjoy their work, finding it rewarding and helpful to their other professional duties, but if their books and essays do not find readers sufficient to justify the effort, the publication mandate falls short of its rationale, namely, to promote scholarly communication and the advancement of knowledge," Bauerlein wrote in the report. "To put it bluntly, universities ask English professors to labor upon projects of little value to others, incurring significant opportunity costs."

When presenting the paper Friday at a meeting here Friday, Bauerlein did not argue for fewer faculty members in literature fields. Instead he argued for changing the pace of literature research and easing some of the pressure placed on junior faculty members to publish research papers and books to get tenure. Instead, he wants to place more emphasis on producing quality works that advance the field. Changing that requirement would give faculty members more time to teach classes, work with students individually, and pursue long-term research projects that they cannot focus on when required to publish so frequently.

Bauerlein acknowledges that his findings are strictly limited to faculty members who study English literature, and that research in other disciplines might be a better use of money. But Bauerlein's findings open a discussion about the most productive use of faculty members' time. At a time when numerous universities are wondering how to be more efficient, Bauerlein's report adds some ammunition to a side claiming that the current structure of faculty members' jobs needs to be examined -- and that there might be too many literature professors.

The paper was produced by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity and released as part of a conference co-hosted by the center and the Cato Institute, a think tank that advocates for limited government and pro-market approaches.

Representatives from the Modern Language Association, the primary professional association of language and literature scholars, said Bauerlein's work raises significant questions about the balance of teaching and research in faculty workloads, an issue the association has studied. But they note that Bauerlein's exploration of the topic is too simplistic.

"We don't think the impact of research can be measured 'by the numbers' alone, as Mark

Bauerlein attempts to do," said Russell Berman and Rosemary G. Feal, president and executive director of the Modern Language Association. "But he does raise important questions about the dissemination and impact of published scholarship."

They also noted that research informs teaching, which cannot be measured by formulas. Correctly weighting the two in the tenure and promotion process is a question institutions will have to grapple with soon.

"We are in the midst of a sea change in higher education as we focus on issues of student learning and innovative teaching, which in turn should lead to adjustments in institutional expectations for publication and research," Berman and Feal said. "It is important that colleges and universities consider how to modify their practices for evaluation, hiring and promotion in accordance with their missions, and for many institutions, this should mean paying greater attention to teaching."

Bauerlein reached his conclusion by examining the English departments at four public universities: the University of Georgia, State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Vermont, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He compared the amount each department spent on research -- which he estimated to be one-third of each faculty member's salary -- and compared that with the number of papers and books the department produced, and how commonly those works were cited.

English departments are producing, Bauerlein found. According to a study by the Modern Language Association, the number of scholarly works (books, essays, reviews, dissertations, etc.) published each year in the fields of English and the foreign languages and literature has climbed from 13,757 in 1959 to about 70,000 in recent years.

Faculty members were also highly productive at the institutions studied in the paper. The University of Georgia's English department, where there are 39 professors, wrote or co-wrote 22 books, edited or co-edited 15 papers, and wrote 200 research essays over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009.

Even faculty members with tenure, commonly stereotyped to be unproductive, produce a significant amount of papers and books. "Put all the research-related activities together and you get a portrait of eminently industrious research groups," Bauerlein wrote. "The image of the tenured professor idling away in perfect job security, enjoying tenure without making further contributions to his or her field, doesn't stand."

The problem is that most of the research is not advancing scholarly communication, because most works are not cited enough to justify the amount of time and money that goes into producing them.

To measure the impact of scholarly publications, Bauerlein counted the number of citations. For papers, he used Google Scholar. For books, whose citations cannot be examined in Google Scholar or other databases as easily, he randomly selected a handful of books and counted the number of times they were cited.

Paper citations fell into patterns. Most papers received only a handful of citations. Of the 17 articles published by the University of Illinois English department, 11 garnered between zero and

two citations and four garnered between three and six citations. Two received more than 20 citations. Books followed a similar pattern.

University	0-2 Citations	3-6 Citations	>6 Citations
University of Georgia	16	4	3
SUNY-Buffalo	11	0	2
University of Vermont	11	3	2
University of Illinois	11	4	2

While the numbers of citations might seem low, they are not significantly different from other disciplines. A [2010 report](#) by Thomson Reuters found that the average number of citations for a U.S. paper in the sciences between 2005 and 2009, roughly the same time period covered in Bauerlein's data, was 1.75. Some fields were significantly higher, such as space sciences and plant and animal sciences, which averaged four citations. But other fields, such as engineering, chemistry, and physics, averaged only one.

Bauerlein puts the blame on institutions for crafting positions that emphasize research that, in the end, is not being read. "There is a glaring mismatch between the resources these universities and faculty members invest and the impact of most published scholarship," he wrote. "Despite scant attention paid to scholarship, a faculty member's promotion and annual review depends heavily on the professor's published work. A university's resources and human capital is thereby squandered as highly trained and intelligent professionals to toil over projects that have little consequence."

In his talk at the conference Friday, Bauerlein did not advocate for fewer literature professors, only for less literary research. "Maybe not everyone should be doing research," he said.

Bauerlein said this project and arguing for changing the field of literary research will dominate the next few years of his life.

Dan Walters: Craziiness governs school aid in California

Sacramento Bee

Published: Sunday, Nov. 27, 2011

The state budget's 800-pound gorilla is the task of educating 6 million elementary and high school students.

It consumes between 35 and 40 percent of the general fund. The money is allocated by a bizarre combination of power politics and a constitutional provision so complex that only a few in and around the Capitol even profess to understand it – and rarely agree.

Since the budget usually can't meet its full constitutional obligation each year, even when the economy is healthy, politicians and education lobbyists hammer out some number. They include a proviso that any unpaid amount will go on what they call "the credit card" to be repaid at some point in the future.

To complicate matters even more, one of the factors determining the obligation is how much money hundreds of districts are receiving in local property taxes, which are also affected by the economy. A huge chunk of the money is allocated for specific purposes called "categorical aids."

Finally, the school aid numbers budget are subject to change at any moment if the state's revenue estimates are off the mark – which they usually are.

It's completely irrational, and effectively forces local school officials to operate on a month-to-month basis – even though they are also tied into labor contracts, especially with teachers, that assume longer-term financial stability.

The current situation is a classic example, and even more convoluted than usual. The 2011-12 state budget adopted in June assumed that the state would receive an extra \$4 billion in revenues. But it also provided that should those dollars not appear, there would be up to \$2.5 billion in automatic spending cuts, three-quarters of it school aid.

However, to gain acquiescence from the California Teachers Association, et al., Gov. Jerry Brown and legislators also passed a law barring school districts from laying off teachers to cope with any cuts.

That really put districts on the spot. Should they assume that the spending cut triggers would be pulled and budget conservatively? Or should they assume that the money would be there?

Those that opted for the former will survive more easily if, as now appears highly likely, school aid will be cut. Those that took a chance will suffer.

San Diego Unified, the state's second-largest district, took a chance. It not only negotiated a "back-loaded" contract with its teachers union that kicks in a 10 percent raise next year but gambled that the extra money would be there and rescinded layoff plans.

District officials now project a huge deficit if triggers are pulled and say that seeking a state bailout – which may also mean a form of receivership – may be their only option if the teachers union refuses to reopen the contract.

It proves that when it comes to school finance, irrationality is not confined to Sacramento.

Dan Walters: Education aimed at specific skills begins a comeback in California

The Sacramento Bee

Published: Monday, Nov. 28, 2011

As Californians worry – with good reason – whether the state will ever truly recover from recession and re-emerge as a global powerhouse, they know that education is one major factor.

They also sense, as demonstrated by a recent USC/Los Angeles Times poll, that California's school system is very troubled, plagued by financial uncertainty and poor outcomes, such as a high dropout rate and low scores on national academic tests.

Clearly, improving education is vital to California's future, and there's no shortage of political, civic and academic discourse about reform – especially in light of the incredibly wide economic, linguistic, cultural and ethnic range of the state's 6 million school kids.

Should we spend more money? If so, how should the funds be apportioned?

Should we have more charter schools? Should we give parents "vouchers" to be spent at private or public schools? Should teachers face greater scrutiny?

Should we require that all students be prepared to attend college, or should we restore what used to be called "vocational education" to our high schools?

The latter issue has become one of the most contentious.

During the last couple of decades, many local school systems sharply reduced vocational education, since renamed "career technical education" or CTE, in favor of college prep, even mandating the latter for all.

But as dropout rates have soared to scandalous levels – 50 percent or more in some districts – it also became evident that eliminating opportunities to acquire job skills was devaluing those not inclined toward higher education.

Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger became a vocal CTE advocate and other political figures, such as Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, joined the chorus. However, many in the educational establishment were reluctant.

Slowly, however, as college graduates collect unemployment insurance while skilled workers in many fields, such as auto mechanics, are in short supply, the worm is turning.

There is a growing realization that not all students are destined for college, nor should they be, that there are too many variations in aptitude and attitude to stuff all kids into the

same pedagogic mold, that many would benefit from job-oriented educations, and that society needs them.

A symbol of that realization is what happened this month in Lodi Unified, one of many school districts that had adopted a college-prep-for-all curriculum.

Lodi is eliminating that well-meaning but misguided dictum and telling its high school students that their educations can be tailored to their individual traits, whether that means college prep or vocational.

As one Lodi trustee, Rob Heberle, put it: "We're putting kids in classes that they are not prepared for and forcing them to fail."

May his number multiply.

The Schools' Lobbyist

Voice of San Diego

Posted: Wednesday, November 23, 2011

By Emily Alpert

When California lawmakers patched together a budget this summer, they did something extraordinary. They wanted to save schools from more cuts. Economic forecasts said the money wasn't there.

They wrote up a budget as if it was there anyways. The state budget banked on \$4 billion extra, and it urged school districts to use that money to stop teacher layoffs.

The move came with a catch: if that \$4 billion never appeared, the state would have to deliver big cuts to schools in the middle of the year. Lawmakers dubbed them "trigger cuts" because they would be triggered by not-so-hot revenues. It said school districts could shorten the school year even more if that happened.

San Diego Unified went ahead and rehired teachers using the promised money. Other school districts decided not to, fearing that if trigger cuts happened, they'd be stuck with a bigger budget and little room to cope. Now it looks like their fears could come true.

The state legislative analyst has already predicted schools will be slashed. The trigger cuts now hinge on an economic forecast from the California Department of Finance. That could have huge consequences for San Diego Unified, where the superintendent says trigger cuts could nudge schools to insolvency.

Monica Henestroza is the person who decodes all this grim news for San Diego Unified. And she's also the one who fights back. As its government relations director and lobbyist, Henestroza meets with state lawmakers and tells the school board how goings-on in Sacramento will impact schools here.

She helped San Diego Unified sort through a tangle of confusion about whether schools would benefit from ending redevelopment. She argued against education cuts. And she also takes on smaller battles, like helping former board member Katherine Nakamura try to get gym credit for marching band.

We talked with Henestroza about the risks facing San Diego schools.

When the budget deal came together, there was a lot of conflicting information about what school districts should do, especially when it came to rehiring. What advice did you give San Diego Unified?

I wouldn't say to the school board, "I think you should do this." What I do is explain the risks. So I explained that there's a potential for midyear cuts, that some of these revenue numbers are optimistic. But as you know in the school district, ultimately it's not my decision.

San Diego Unified is now looking at, as its own leaders say, the potential of insolvency if midyear cuts happen. Based on your advice, was it responsible for the school board to build a budget based on the state's optimistic assumptions? What specifically did you tell the school board about the risk they faced?

The trigger cuts have always been a real possibility. The legislature put the trigger mechanism in the budget bill, and Governor Brown refused to sign a bill in September that would have created an alternative process. The exact probability has and continues to be difficult to calculate. Our economy is tied to national factors and even political dynamics in other parts of the world - like the relative stability in Greece or Italy. As staff, my goal was to make sure the board knew both the reality and size of the downside risk.

Other districts didn't do any rehiring. Have there been legal consequences for them?

I don't believe there have been any lawsuits.

I've heard San Diego Unified has written off shortening the school year, which was one of the few options that was laid out for midyear cuts. Why is that?

It's not just San Diego. When they announced that option, the first question (from school districts) was, "How do you think that's going to get done?" The biggest potential savings would come from reducing the salaries of teachers who would no longer need to teach those days. But you can't abrogate their contract midyear.

Education has been cut by 16 percent over the last four years, resulting in deep cuts in places like San Diego Unified. Are there other areas where Sacramento can and should cut instead? Is there really any way to avoid education cuts?

In 2009, the state increased taxes temporarily in addition to making cuts. Those temporary taxes expired this year when the state failed to reach the consensus needed to extend it. If efforts underway to restore those \$9 to \$10 billion in state revenues prove successful, then education cuts would not be necessary.

On the other side of the equation is the question of expenditures. In years past, some areas of the budget, such as corrections, did not experience year-over-year cuts, even as education was cut dramatically and disproportionately. In a cuts-only budget scenario, it is difficult for education cuts to be avoided completely. But if the state is able to increase revenues, school funding could be stabilized.

Is school funding going to return to normal if the economy gets better?

The foundation of education funding has been hurt in recent years. One of the clearest examples is the issue of deferrals. Deferrals are essentially one-time cuts. In order to spend less money one year, the state will defer payment of state aid until the next year.

The state now defers so many payments of basic school aid that about \$10 billion for programs and services this year will not be paid until the 2012-13 fiscal year. It has been a popular solution to close budget holes in Sacramento because districts can "make up" these cuts through borrowing. Most districts now are forced to borrow large sums of money each year just to keep the school doors open.

But there is a limit to how far this strategy can be stretched, and we're pretty much there now. Also, it will be difficult to unwind the damaging deferrals, even as the economy improves. The state's cuts to education have been fairly evenly divided between on-going, permanent cuts and the one-time cuts that are deferrals.

New money for schools will probably go first to restore the on-going cuts, so it may be a long time before the structural deferrals are addressed.

People have said this is the time for school districts to advocate, but what can they advocate for? If the Department of Finance forecasts California will be short on revenue, how much wiggle room is there for the state?

Well, if the Finance Department comes out with something very, very close to what the legislative analyst (LAO) predicted, that could still mean education doesn't face midyear cuts.

Right now the LAO is saying California will be \$3.7 billion short. (If the state is at least \$2 billion short, schools are slated to be cut.) So how close are the estimates from LAO and Finance typically? One of the LAO staff members said, "We're typically within 2 percentage points of each other."

What's a 2 percent swing? It turns out to be \$1.68 billion. So if finance estimates that revenue will be 2 percentage points higher than the LAO, K12 is no longer set up for midyear cuts. That's how close it is.

All of that is to say that finance could have a very, very similar assessment as the LAO and still have extraordinary differences in what happens for schools. There's a very serious risk here that shouldn't be minimized. But I just think it's important for people to know that this isn't final.

But if the finance projections do lead to cuts, could the Legislature get together and say, "We won't do this?"

The sentiment among the majority in the Capital was that the trigger cuts would never take effect, that the deeper cuts that would devastate K-12 were very improbable. Now the possibility is very real.

It would take the governor to call a special session (to revisit the budget). And so far I have not heard a signal that that's going to happen. Earlier this year, the legislature wanted to change the trigger cuts and they put together a bill. The governor vetoed that bill. And he said he vetoed the bill because it would have undermined investor confidence in California. I think if there is going to be change to the trigger, the person who would be most important to making that happen would be Governor Brown.

President Richard Barrera wants Sacramento to raise taxes on things like oil or alcohol to preserve education. Is this something you're pushing in Sacramento? If so, what's the reaction? Likelihood? If not, why not?

We've supported stable funding for schools, and increasingly it looks like additional tax revenue will have to be part of the solution. Many Democratic legislators support additional revenues in order to save education and other program areas. But it takes a two-thirds vote to increase tax revenue, so you need Republicans to vote for it too.

Most Assembly Republicans have taken the position that the cause of education underfunding is not the size of pie, but rather how it is distributed between program areas. Governor Brown has been persistent in his efforts to increase revenue, in addition to curbing government spending. The new redistricting maps may help moderate some of the opposition to tax increases, but it's hard to tell if it will actually translate into votes for that kind of package.

An increase in tax revenue is more likely to come from an initiative placed on the ballot with signatures. And even it does make it to the ballot, Governor Brown and other state and local leaders won't get the necessary public support to pass it without a clear plan for how the money will be spent well.

Locally, we hear a lot of frustration about the two-thirds threshold for tax increases. People like Barrera want it lowered to 55 percent for education. Is this something you're pushing in Sacramento and something you think can get done?

The parcel tax threshold legislation is also an uphill battle. Senator Simitian has authored a bill to amend the state constitution in this way for several years now. The problem is that constitutional amendments require a two-thirds vote, and Republicans have held back from voting for it. In the case of school bonds, it took about a decade of concerted efforts to lower the vote threshold. So it's something that can be done, but it takes time and a lot of work.

Imposed contract angers El Camino faculty

By Rob Kuznia

Daily Breeze

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In a move that infuriated the teachers union, the El Camino College Board of Trustees on Monday voted to impose a new contract on the faculty, effectively putting a unilateral end to the community college's most contentious round of contract talks in decades.

The 5-0 vote, which followed impassioned pleas from the faculty and students not to go through with it, comes on the heels of a report from a fact-finder who overwhelmingly sided with the college district over the union on a wide range of issues, from salary to health benefits to the length of the work year for counselors.

The vote essentially means that the two sides have an agreement, regardless of whether the faculty agrees.

Now, the faculty union plans to convene to determine how - and whether - to respond. Union President Elizabeth Shadish, who late last month warned the talks could lead to a strike, backed away from that rhetoric Monday, saying that while it is still possible, it isn't likely.

"We did have a general meeting once the (fact-finder's) report came out, and probably had 80 or so faculty show up," she said. "At the meeting it became very clear the faculty wanted to act, and now we just have to decide how best to do that."

In any case, whatever the faculty decides to do will be strictly for the purpose of making a statement, as the contract approved by the board is legally binding.

All told, the fact-finder's report sided with the college district on 12 of 14 issues.

Monday's meeting was an emotional affair, with several faculty members and students berating the board before the vote.

"It was a good day to be working at El Camino a week ago, today it's not," said Margaret Quinones-Perez, vice president of the faculty union.

Chris Jeffries, a counselor, said the new contract would decrease her annual pay by \$20,000.

"I will have to sell my house, because I'm a single mother," she told the board.

Among students voicing disapproval of the imposed contract was Josh Casper, the student representative who sits on the dais with the elected board but has no vote.

In particular, he opposed the proposal on counselors, arguing that lines for counseling are already extremely long.

"I come to you with the sincerest plea," he said, "don't hurt the students at El Camino."

The new contract follows the recommendations of the report. That means that faculty members will not get raises, counselors will see their work year reduced from 12 months a year to 10 and employee health contributions for the most expensive health plans will go up considerably, though HMOs will still come at no cost to the employee.

The new contract also opens the door to cancel winter session, a five-week program bookended by the longer fall and spring sessions.

For months, the sides clashed over what to do with a \$23 million reserve, which amounts to about a fifth of the general fund. The union accused the district of sitting on it. District officials countered that they are spending down the reserve at a clip of about \$7 million a year, leaving them just a three-year cushion to deficit-spend.

Another issue centered on the length of the work year for counselors. For years, counselors have been the only faculty members who work a 12-month year; the others keep a 10-month schedule. The new contract will bring them in line with the others in a phased-in approach that will take two years.

The union argued that this is unfair to counselors who took their jobs based on a set of promises. (The union was OK with hiring new counselors on a 10-month schedule.)

On pay for full-timers, the union had asked for a 5 percent raise to take effect in July 2013. The new contract provides no raise.

Hawthorne student turns down full scholarship in academic gamble

Motivated Nigeria native turns down full-ride award for a chance at the Ivy League

By Rob Kuznia

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For 15-year-old Hawthorne resident Thelma Godslaw, fear of failure was instilled at an early age, when teachers in her native Nigeria rewarded wrong answers with whacks from a cane.

But the bigger motivator for her was the elementary school's hard-hearted ranking system. Instead of grades, every child was publicly assigned a number, from one to 35, based on his or her standing in the class.

"I was always second best, or third," she said. "I always wanted to be No. 1."

Now, at Leuzinger High School in Lawndale, she is.

Though just 15, Thelma is already a senior. She's enrolled in six Advanced Placement courses. Her end-of-the-semester report card has never been blemished with a B. She's the only student in the school to have earned a perfect score on the AP calculus test, and by night takes an advanced calculus class at El Camino College.

In October, Thelma was offered a full-ride scholarship to attend the prestigious Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, an award worth \$120,000. She turned it down. Why? She has her sights on the Ivy League and is days away from learning whether she'll get there.

Thelma's academic success illustrates the inner drive that propels many immigrants out of their social strata, which in her case is a step above poverty. But it also demonstrates how, for high-achieving low-income students, playing the scholarship game can be a high-stakes gamble.

Thelma lives in a two-bedroom apartment with her mother and three siblings, one older and two younger. Though a bit cramped, their living conditions are an upgrade from the one-bedroom unit in which they'd stayed for a couple of years after their 2004 arrival.

Thelma's decision to say "no thanks" to the Bucknell offer wasn't easy.

"It's like turning down a million dollars," she acknowledged.

On the other hand, saying yes to the award - officially known as the Posse Scholarship - would have meant forfeiting her dream of attending an Ivy League school, namely Yale.

That's because she was given just three days to make a decision that was binding. She decided to hold out.

Now, the rest of November promises to be a nail-biter. Dec. 1 is the day she'll learn whether she'll be the recipient of the prestigious Questbridge National College Match Scholarship, which would cover 100 percent of tuition and housing to attend one of several participating universities. These include MIT, Stanford, Princeton and her dream school, Yale.

Thelma didn't gamble without cause. In October, about a month after she applied for the Questbridge award, word came back that she was a finalist. Winning would be no small feat: Last year, just 310 students across the nation received the honor.

Petite and soft-spoken, Thelma plans to major in biochemistry, with an eye toward becoming a general surgeon. To attain this goal, she spends five hours a night studying at a TV tray in a living room recliner.

"She studies until 2 in the morning," marveled her mother, Jully Godslaw (pronounced Julie), who speaks in a thick Nigerian accent. "She's too much." That, she explained, is Nigerian slang for "she's excellent."

Migrating for the children

The family journeyed to the United States in 2004 for the express purpose of providing educational opportunities for the children, Jully said. This required giving up their five-bedroom house and everything else they had in Lagos, Nigeria. Jully sacrificed her college degree in business administration from the University of Lagos; it became void the moment she set foot in the United States.

Upon her arrival, Jully went from working as a public relations officer at an oil company in Nigeria to working as a security guard at an elementary school in Compton.

Now, Jully attends Los Angeles Southwest College, where she studies nursing. She also works full-time as a licensed vocational nurse in the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.

Their hardships aren't confined to the financial. The parents have divorced.

For Thelma, the antidote to life's trials seems to be to study, study, study.

Her academic counselor at Leuzinger, Judy Grood, said she's never seen a student so driven in her 20 years on the job.

"She will not leave her class, short of being dragged out," she said with a laugh. "She feels every minute in class is important, for fear that she would miss a gem or a drop of knowledge."

Despite her low-income status, Thelma can compete with students of privilege. She scored a 1950 on her SAT, putting her in the 90th percentile nationwide. The average score in California and nationwide is just above 1500.

Helping Leuzinger turn around

Thelma's academic success also is a boon to her school. Leuzinger High has long battled a sullied reputation, sown from decades of dismal academic performance. But the school, which serves a low-income population, appears to be in the midst of a turnaround, with test scores on a steep upward trajectory.

"I think that she represents what we are trying to accomplish at Leuzinger High School," said Principal Ryan Smith, who informed the Daily Breeze of Thelma's prowess. "She is a role model for all of our students, in particular those who are African-American."

Indeed, Thelma is among 3,100 students across the nation - out of 160,000 applicants - to be named an Outstanding Participant in the National Achievement Scholarship Program, which recognizes outstanding achievement among African-American students.

Jully said other parents initially urged her to send her children to another school. But Leuzinger was within walking distance of their apartment. Besides, she had faith in the school.

"My belief is this: Any child that is smart is smart - it doesn't matter the school," Jully said, noting that her son Peter also is thriving there.

Thelma, meanwhile, praised her teachers.

"They take the extra time to help us out after school and during lunch," she said. "They are always pushing us to do better."

And all without the use of canes.

Glendale Community College to cut summer classes, faculty pay

Agreement anticipates more state budget cuts and comes after weeks of negotiations.

Glendale Community College is poised to reduce its 2012 summer session by an additional 80 classes and cut faculty pay 3.95% if state revenues fail to meet expectations, according to the terms of a new contract announced Tuesday.

“No one is happy with it, but it was the best we could do, so we are just going to have to accept it,” Faculty Guild President Isabelle Saber said.

The agreement between the college and its faculty union hinges on the severity of mid-year state budget cuts to public education that are expected to be announced mid-December, representatives for both parties said.

If state revenues fall more than \$1 billion short, triggering a \$30-million state funding cut for community colleges and a \$10 per-unit student fee increase, full-time faculty members will see their salaries reduced 2.95% during the current academic year, officials said.

If revenues are more than \$2 billion below projections, community colleges will face \$102 million in cuts. In that case, full-time Glendale Community College faculty members will take a 3.95% salary reduction, while adjunct faculty members will absorb a 1% salary reduction. College and union leaders also would return to the bargaining table to discuss additional cuts as needed.

“I believe both sides really were negotiating in the best interest of the district and the students,” President/Supt. Dawn Lindsay said. “I really have to give them credit. This is hard.”

The pay reductions in both scenarios would save the college \$675,000 and \$1 million, respectively, said Ron Nakasone, vice president of administrative services.

No matter the scenario, summer school, which already took a hit this year, would be reduced further. The 2012 session will include 120 courses with faculty members earning 80% of their summer rate. Last summer, the college offered 200 summer school classes while paying faculty members just 60% of their normal intersession salaries.

Faculty members are paid on a 10-month system, and because the agreed upon pay cut is retroactive to the beginning of the fall semester, they will have to absorb the entire reduction in the seven remaining paychecks, Saber said.

“It will be a 6.5% cut on our remaining paychecks,” she said. “The more time we spent, the

heavier that burden would have become. That was also a consideration for our members.”

The average Glendale Community College faculty member has seen their income drop by about \$15,000 in the last year, Saber said, adding that they are now some of the lowest-paid, when compared to 13 Southern California community college districts.

“In all the different snapshots, for entry-level, mid-level and high-level faculty, we are either dead last now, or maybe 12th,” Saber said. “We are really lagging behind in terms of our pay behind everyone else, including Compton College.”

The college has already reduced expenditures by more than \$7 million, whittling its 2011-12 operating budget down to \$82.7 million through staff reductions, a scaled-back 2011 summer session and the elimination of the 2012 winter session, among other measures.

Earlier this year, the management and classified staff bargaining groups agreed to accept pay reductions of 5% and 2.8%, respectively.

During a college board of trustees meeting on Nov. 21, Sacramento lobbyist Mark MacDonald told officials to prepare for the worst, although there may be relief in the form of a tax measure that could generate \$400 million for community colleges — if it makes it to the ballot.

“You could have a \$400-million increase versus another year of looking at where we are going to make cuts, flat budgets, additional deferrals,” he said. “It is a huge difference.”

When droids take your job

LA Times

A duo from MIT argue that rapid computer advances may be vaporizing careers faster than workers can train for new ones.

November 28, 2011

The stubbornly high unemployment rate has left policymakers wondering whether there's something more at work than just an unusually steep recession. Has the country, its businesses and its markets changed in some fundamental way, leaving millions of Americans with skills that are no longer needed? Economists are sharply divided on that point, but two from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology make a compelling argument that the technology revolution is vaporizing careers faster than many Americans can embark on new ones.

When productivity increases, that tends to boost wealth and economic growth. Yet even though productivity grew faster in the past decade than it has since the 1960s, job growth was slower than it has been since the Depression, even ignoring the huge job losses in 2008 and 2009. And median income — the dividing line between the top 50% of annual earnings and the bottom 50% — fell for the first time since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started tracking that figure in the 1950s.

Economist Tyler Cowan of George Mason University blames technology, or rather, the lack of major innovations of the sort that revolutionized economies in previous centuries and created entire industries in the first half of the 1900s. But that ignores the incredible leap represented by computers and the Internet, which have given rise to mini-industries on the platforms they've created. Think about the retail opportunities presented by eBay and Amazon, the applications and services made possible by Facebook, the mobile universe opened up by smartphones.

MIT economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee have a different theory, which they discussed in a new e-book titled "Race Against the Machine" and at the recent Techonomy conference in Tucson. They argue that rapid technological advances have caused a structural change in the economy that many U.S. workers and institutions simply aren't prepared for.

At the root of the change is the phenomenon that microchip pioneer Gordon Moore first noted 46 years ago: the doubling of chip processing power every year to 18 months. That relentless improvement is enabling computers, which once were considered capable only of crunching numbers or following detailed instructions, to take on more complex tasks that involve recognizing patterns and responding to unanticipated events. For example, Brynjolfsson and McAfee noted that Google programmed a fleet of Toyota Priuses to drive themselves safely across California roadways last year, and software has

progressed from understanding spoken words to grasping the meaning of a sentence. As processing power continues to double, those capabilities will improve dramatically and expand to more devices.

Computers still aren't very good at creative tasks, such as generating ideas or finding ways to apply lessons from one experience in a totally different context. But in Tucson, McAfee asserted that "the list of things humans are demonstrably better at than computers is shrinking pretty dramatically." Brynjolfsson observed that about 60% of U.S. workers perform "information processing tasks," and "it's hard to think of any of those that won't be profoundly affected and possibly eliminated by these technologies."

At the same time, the ability of computers to make humans more productive is growing exponentially. Jeffrey Katzenberg, chief executive of DreamWorks Animation, said at the conference that an expert animator can create only about 3 seconds' worth of a movie in a week because of the many hours spent waiting for computers to render the images in 3D. With the next generation of computers, he said, those workers will be able to animate and apply effects in real time, creating scenes 50 to 70 times as fast.

That's astounding, and it's great for DreamWorks and its animators, who can turn ideas into movies faster. The challenge for the United States — and every other country — is helping more people to take advantage of that leap in power rather than being left behind by it. The same could be said of any technology-fueled change in society, including the advent of commercial farming and the industrial revolution. What's different this time, Brynjolfsson and McAfee say, is that the changes brought about by the new technology are happening much, much faster.

The advances in productivity have generated a huge amount of wealth in the U.S. over the last three decades, but those gains have been reaped by those at the top of the income ladder. The most-educated workers' income has risen, particularly since the invention of the World Wide Web, while the wages of unskilled American workers have been trending down for more than three decades, Brynjolfsson and McAfee say. Meanwhile, as workers are replaced by technology, corporations are holding on to a greater share of the earnings.

On the bright side, the Internet and information technology are creating tremendous opportunities for entrepreneurs and for companies that adapt. So many more tools are freely available, barriers to entry are dramatically lower and the cost of marketing and distributing products globally is vanishing.

In fact, Brynjolfsson contends, the U.S. economy should be growing faster. Part of the reason the unemployment rate has stayed so high is that companies can't find employees equipped to help them expand their operations.

Brynjolfsson and McAfee offer a long list of suggested responses, but the one that

matters most in the long term is to produce workers with the right set of skills. That starts with a more effective educational system for all ages, including adult retraining programs. Yet instead of investing in that system, cash-strapped states and cities are cramming more kids into classrooms and raising the cost of higher education.

If the authors are right, there's no short-term fix to the fundamental problem U.S. workers face. But as lawmakers struggle to breathe life into the moribund economy and bring down budget deficits, they need to recognize that growth over the long term depends on how well the country harnesses the technology-fueled advances in productivity. That means equipping far more Americans with skills relevant to the new era. Otherwise, the stagnating wages and employment of the past decade will become the painful new normal.