

Compton College teams up with Sheriff Baca

.lasentinel.net

Two Compton Center alumni were recently presented graduation certificates by Sheriff Lee Baca during a ceremony at the Sheriff's Training Academy and Regional Services (STARS) Center in Whittier, Calif. The sister and brother team, Carolyn and Reginald Scott, earned matching Master degrees in Public Administration (MPA) from National University, which partners with the Los Angeles Sheriff Department's own University.

Compton Community College District Board of Trustees member Dr. Deborah LeBlanc (Area 4) attended the graduation ceremony. "Sharing our students' successes is an honor," said LeBlanc. "We are proud to recognize these alumni who have overcome adversity and challenging life circumstances to become successful professionals who now dedicate themselves to helping others do the same."

The two siblings were born in Compton, Calif., and attend Longfellow Elementary School until moving into the Los Angeles Unified School District while living in South Central Los Angeles with their single father. Their father only completed the 7th grade and Carolyn and Reginald knew that education and sports would be their ticket to a better life. Little did they know that they would endure a lot, including Reginald surviving two shootings, before they could complete their higher education and make their dream of attending graduate school together a reality.

Today, Carolyn Scott works as a training coordinator managing the Civilian Training Unit for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, a position she has held since June 2008. Prior to joining the Sheriff's Department, Scott worked for AT & T Wireless (formerly Cingular Wireless) for 11 years. Earning her MPA helped her transition from the private sector to working for local government. "The public and private sector operations are entirely different and the MPA program gave me a full organizational overview to prepare me for my new career in the public sector," explained Scott. "The focus for me was learning how inter-government works and the role law enforcement plays in local government."

In 1991, Carolyn enrolled concurrently at the former Compton Community College and California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) while also working three jobs to help out her single-father household. She graduated from CSUDH with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management in August 1998.

Once Carolyn became a real-life example of a first generation college student for her brother, Reginald settled into his junior year at Alain Leroy Locke High School and began to excel on the football field. During his senior year, he was honored as an All-Star middle linebacker before graduating in 1993. He continued his education at Los Angeles Southwest College where he earned a football scholarship to New Mexico State University. Tragedy struck two weeks before Reginald was to leave for New Mexico in 1996 when he was shot in the back while attending a backyard pool party.

After a tough year-long recovery, Reginald was offered the opportunity to play football for the former Compton Community College during 1996-1997. He graduated from Compton Community College in May 2000 with an associate degree and earned yet another scholarship to Whittier College where he subsequently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies and Physical Education.

Carolyn and Reginald had always planned to attend graduate school together, but once again plans were put on hold when Reginald suffered a life-threatening injury for the second time at the hands of a shooter in 2006. After another long recovery, their plans to attend graduate school became a possibility when Carolyn left work in the private sector and entered public service at the LASD. "I as soon as I heard about the MPA program at National University through LASDU, I jumped at the opportunity," said Carolyn. "My brother and I were able to make our distant thoughts about graduate school a reality."

Reginald currently works as a recreation coordinator for the City of Los Angeles, running the CLASS Park after-school youth program in south Los Angeles. He also worked for several years as a probation officer for at-risk youth for the Los Angeles Unified School District. Reginald took his own tragic experiences as an at-risk youth and is now giving back by helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds. "He can now help young people and do it from a place of experience," said Carolyn. "He can help change the lives of people that came from the same place we came from."

About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community's education solution offering 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 four-year university or train for a career. Many classes are available and offered at an affordable price-fees are only \$26 per unit. The catalog and class schedule for day, evening, weekend and online courses is available on the Web site at www.compton.edu <<http://www.compton.edu>> or may be picked up at Compton Center located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA. For more information, call 310-900-1600.

ECC taking applications to exhibit art work

The Daily Breeze

From staff reports

Posted: 04/05/2010 07:02:38 AM PDT

TORRANCE

Artists invited to submit for exhibition: The El Camino College Library is now accepting applications from artists in the Los Angeles area to exhibit paintings, photography, sculptures, drawings and other art forms for the 2010-11 academic year. The deadline for applications is April 30.

More information and exhibit applications are available by contacting Ed Martinez, El Camino College public access librarian, at 310-660-3576, Ext. 3876, or by e-mail: emartinez@elcamino.edu; or write: Schauerman Library, El Camino College, 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506.

El Camino College debaters win big

The Daily Breeze

From staff reports

Posted: 04/04/2010 09:29:23 PM PDT

ECC debaters win big

Torrance. The El Camino College forensics team has been named the community college national sweepstakes champion for the National Parliamentary Debate Association's 2009-10 season. In addition to placing first among all community colleges, El Camino finished fifth among the 250 campuses competing in the NPDA, the nation's largest intercollegiate debate organization.

The team also competed in the California Community College Forensic Association State Championships in Fresno earlier in March, finishing in third place overall.

Individual accomplishments include a win by Stirling McKenzie, who was named top speaker in the debate contest. Robert Maxwell was the third top speaker in the state, among all events. These two also teamed up to win gold in Parliamentary Team Debate, along with the teams of Ashley Graham and David "Bear" Saulet Bey, Richard Ewell and Mark Faaita, and Daanish Hameed and Wendy Steiner. Wesley Eller and Shouhei Ichimiya won a bronze in Parliamentary Team Debate.

Maxwell, who had the highest scores in the tournament, took home a gold in extemporaneous speaking. Eller and Ewell won silver in extemporaneous, and Faaita won bronze in that same category.

The El Camino College forensics team is headed this week to New Orleans for the national competition. The team is coached by Francesca Bishop and Mark and Diana Crossman, as well as Mark Urista.

Space Science Day
The Daily Breeze

Click on the link below for the Space Science Day photo the Breeze ran in Sunday's paper, as well as other Space Day photos on their Web page.

<http://lang.dailybreeze.com/photos/photos.asp?a=974168#id=974168&num=0>

Los Rios Community College District To Lead Health IT Consortium

CaliforniaHealthLine.org

Wednesday, April 07, 2010

Los Rios Community College District has received a \$5.4 million grant from HHS to lead a consortium of 14 community colleges in establishing non-degree training programs in health information technology, the Sacramento Business Journal reports.

Los Rios is one of five community college districts nationwide selected to set up health IT training programs that can be completed in six months or less.

Funds for the grants come from the 2009 federal economic stimulus package.

Program Details

The Los Rios-based consortium plans to work with UC-Davis' health informatics program to develop classes and curriculum in health IT training (*Sacramento Business Journal*, 4/6).

Each participating community college must enroll at least 150 students in the program, for a total of 2,100 participants consortium-wide.

The grant also calls for the community colleges to connect people who finish the health IT training programs with job opportunities.

Coming Up

The grant calls for the colleges to implement the health IT training programs by Sept. 30.

Officials expect the grant to be extended for a second year and provide an additional \$5.3 million for the Los Rios-based consortium (Locke, Sacramento Bee, 4/7).

Community colleges struggle

Sign on San Diego

BY CINDY MILES, SUNITA COOKE AND RON MANZONI

SIGN ON SAN DIEGO

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2010 AT 12:04 A.M.

Doing more with less has become the mantra of these economically troubled times, and nowhere has that become more evident than at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, where a record number of students are being served at a time of historic underfunding by the state.

Unprecedented budget cuts to the tune of \$10 million for the district in the past year have decimated certain programs and services and left our colleges with no choice but to slash nearly 600 classes.

Even so, Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges have defied the statewide norm, growing 4.2 percent since last spring to just over 30,700 students, well exceeding the approximately 26,000 at nearby San Diego State University and its satellite campus in the Imperial Valley. Elsewhere, reversing five years of growth, California community colleges as a whole are showing an enrollment loss of 21,000 for the current academic year, state Chancellor Jack Scott reported recently, adding that the numbers will continue to drop as student access is increasingly limited by funding cuts.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca is anticipating a still larger deficit of \$12 to \$15 million for 2010-2011, but even the loss of hundreds of course sections and the cutback in support staff to guide students haven't stopped the growing influx of new students each semester.

The California community college system is the largest in higher education in the nation, peaking at 2.9 million students in 2008-2009, yet it receives the smallest portion of the state funding pie for higher education.

The realistic question is: How long can we continue serving thousands of students for whom we are receiving not a scintilla in growth compensation from the state? The honest answer is: Not long at all.

Community colleges are the economic engine driving the state, providing associate degrees, preparing students for transfer to four-year universities, offering opportunities for lifelong learning and training the workforce.

During economic downturns, we have the added job of helping laid off workers prepare for alternative employment. Failing to meet this need would dramatically impede economic recovery.

We have managed this far, albeit with serious cuts, but we do so with the somber realization that students are becoming increasingly frustrated as they're unable to get the classes or learning support they need.

Their frustration is understandable and their impatience with a system they view as devaluing education is palpable. With labor forecasts and leading studies warning of a shortage of college-educated workers in California to sustain future jobs, many question why Sacramento continues to slash higher education's share of the funding pie.

Students from Grossmont and Cuyamaca were among the 13,000 in Sacramento on March 22, carrying their message to the Capitol steps in a rally.

Inside the Capitol, their voices reverberated. Just days before that, hundreds of our students participated in an educational approach to the statewide "Day of Action" that included rallies and marches at community colleges and universities and closed with a mass rally at Balboa Park and a march to the governor's San Diego office.

"Let me graduate before I'm 50," read a placard spotted at the Grossmont College event.

Students listened with incredulity as one speaker noted that while the state contributes about \$3,700 annually to the education of a community college student, it spends about \$36,000 for the average prison inmate.

They heard two of us explain how the administration struggled to keep the budget cuts as far from the classroom as possible, but in the end had to cut class sections and operate with 149 unfilled contract positions. Now, we're forced to look at reducing even more for next year.

So how did we get ourselves in such a pickle?

California's stagnant economy and an estimated \$20 billion state budget deficit have impacted all of higher education. Our state universities have responded by sharply reducing enrollment, higher fees and more restrictive admission requirements.

Students who in previous years would have been heading there now turn to us to progress in their education.

On top of that, joblessness is driving up the number of people returning to school to learn new skills. Then you have those who are fortunate enough to have jobs, but also re-entering the classroom to better their chances of retaining employment. Not to overlook the critical fact that the high school class of 2010 is the largest in the history of the state. These factors, along with the excellence of our faculty and the education we provide, have placed Grossmont-Cuyamaca in the untenable situation of serving more students with far less money in our coffers. In his 2010-2011 budget, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed \$126 million in growth funding for community colleges, only enough to allow access to about 60,000 of the anticipated 200,000 incoming students. As bleak state fiscal projections and political budget gyrations continue, even these funds appear dangerously at risk.

Although the economy has finally begun showing signs of life, the labor market remains stubbornly sluggish. The unfortunate fact is that the economic recovery is not happening fast enough. The state's funding woes have become so entrenched that it's expected to be three to five years before California is able to pull itself up from its financial quagmire.

Collectively, our students have probably never been so engaged in the educational process as they are now. They clearly understand what is at stake. In addition to participating in rallies, they are writing the governor and legislators.

One student wrote about attending two colleges to get the classes she needs and the pay cut she's experienced from the loss of work hours. With the slashing of course sections, she is no longer able to arrange her class schedule around her job.

"I have to take two days a week off work just to go to class because my classes are being spread apart," she writes. "It's affecting my family (and) pretty soon, I might have to choose between going to school or working."

In a state once heralded for the quality of its educational institutions and its commitment to providing universal access to college, it is a travesty that such a choice has to be even considered.

Miles is chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District. Cooke is president of Grossmont College. Manzoni is interim president of Cuyamaca College.

Double fees buy spot on college's fast track

Boston.com

Bristol deal with for-profit eliminates waiting list, raises questions of fairness

By Tracy Jan

Globe Staff / April 9, 2010

Bristol Community College is teaming up with a for-profit education company to offer classes in popular allied health programs, a first-of-its-kind partnership that will allow students to bypass waiting lists — provided they pay double the tuition.

The initiative, which the college will offer with The Princeton Review at its New Bedford campus beginning next fall for some programs, has stirred criticism among some educators, who say providing a fast-track education only to students who can afford to pay more than \$8,000 a year runs counter to the mission of the state's community colleges: a commitment to access and equity for all.

“It’s just unfair,” said Joe LeBlanc, president of the Massachusetts Community College Council. “I would be quite upset if a student who could pay two times as much jumped to the head of the line to take Bristol Community College classes. Public education, in my mind, means you’re keeping your costs as low as you possibly can. We serve everyone, and in particular, the have-nots.”

But college officials say the partnership is a creative way for the school to meet burgeoning demand to train health care workers. Enrollment in Massachusetts community colleges has jumped 10 percent in the past year, the largest increase in recent years. And education officials expect similar collaborations on other public campuses in Massachusetts and around the country in coming years.

“In an age of scarce resources, we’re just not going to get money from our state to expand our enrollments,” said John Sbrega, president of Bristol Community College. “Such public-private partnerships are the wave of the future.”

The new courses offered under the partnership — in nursing, occupational therapy, phlebotomy, massage therapy, health care information, and health science — will primarily be taught online by Bristol adjunct faculty, and also include some face-to-face instruction for labs and clinics. Students will be able to earn two-year degrees as well as one-year certificates.

As part of the deal with Bristol, The Princeton Review will invest \$2 million in the project, which includes a new college facility in downtown New Bedford that will be outfitted with state-of-the-art science labs, computers, offices, and a health clinic to offer faculty-supervised services

to the community. The company will also pay for the development of curriculum and technology required for online learning.

The partnership will allow the college to add a couple dozen faculty members to its allied health programs and expand the number of students it can serve, college officials said.

Bristol officials estimate that tuition and fees for the programs will be about \$8,500 a year, an amount Bristol says it needs to charge to cover the higher costs and repay The Princeton Review's initial investment.

A full-time student studying nursing, for example, now pays half that amount — if he or she can get in. The college currently accepts only 72 nursing students a year out of a pool of about 1,000 applicants because of limited instructors and space. The rest land on a wait list. Now those students may choose to pay the additional money for a spot in the new program.

College officials say the unusual arrangement will not affect Bristol's tax-exempt status because state funds will not be used and all profits will be returned to The Princeton Review. They were unable to specify how tuition proceeds would be divided because the agreement will not be finalized until May 1.

Princeton Review representatives say Bristol will serve as a test case over the next two years, and the company eventually plans to replicate the model around the country. It has already spoken to nearly 15 community colleges in half a dozen states, said Gerry Kavanaugh, vice president for the company's community college initiative.

Some Bristol faculty bristle at the notion of two-tiered tuition.

"I don't know how the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can justify letting some students pay more for the exact same degree," said Diana Yohe, who teaches office administration. "Are we in the for-profit business as opposed to being a public institution that gives equal access to our students?"

College officials say that with online classes, students will be able to earn a degree and enter the working world faster.

"If people want a placement and will pay more, I don't see why that shouldn't happen," said Marie Marshall, director of the nursing program. "The work could pay them back in spades."

Richard Freeland, state commissioner of higher education, defends such partnerships, which have become a source of research funds for universities.

“This is an opportunity to do something exciting and important that would not otherwise be possible,” said Freeland, adding that the state has carefully reviewed the legal and financial ramifications of the arrangement. “There is a need for the same kind of relationship in other community colleges, so we’re going to see more of it.”

In California, another for-profit company, Kaplan University, has signed an agreement with the community college system to deliver general education courses online, said Peter Smith, Kaplan’s senior vice president for academic strategy and the former president of the Community College of Vermont.

Sbrega said the Bristol program, first reported in the online publication Inside Higher Ed, will strengthen the economy in Southeastern Massachusetts, which is struggling with high unemployment and a shortage of health care workers. The new nursing program expects to accept students in three years but has already drawn interest from prospective students.

Among them is Maryjane Gebar, a 31-year-old New Bedford resident who has not found a steady job since graduating from a different college in 2007 with a bachelor’s degree in business and an associate’s in criminal justice and paralegal studies. She applied to three public nursing programs, including Bristol’s, and sees paying the extra money to enroll in the new program as a worthy investment.

“Even though it’s more money, in the end it pays off, because once you have the education, the jobs are there,” she said.

Peralta fights to keep report secret

By Thomas Peele

Oakland Tribune

Posted: 04/08/2010 02:31:29 PM PDT

Updated: 04/08/2010 07:13:28 PM PDT

OAKLAND — The Peralta Community College District has asked a state appeals court to block the release of a report exploring Chancellor Elihu Harris' involvement in the awarding of a no-bid contract to a business partner.

The district has asked the court to overturn a decision by Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch, who ruled last month that a censored copy of the report, prepared by Peralta's inspector general, should be released to Bay Area News Group. The newspaper group sued Peralta for the document after the district refused to release it under the state Public Records Act.

In the district's appeal, Peralta lawyer Robin Johansen argued the report is a preliminary draft that is exempt from release. "The entire draft should have been protected from disclosure," she wrote.

In a court document opposing the appeal, news group lawyer Duffy Carolan argued that the district missed its deadline to file an appeal. She also wrote that draft exemption Johansen cited is not viable.

"No California Appellate Court has sanctioned the use of these exemptions as a basis to withhold information about public employee wrongdoing," Carolan wrote.

The news group reported in July that Harris did not recuse himself from the decision to award a no-bid construction management contract to his business partner, Mark Lindquist, in a real estate deal. Lindquist's firm was eventually paid more than \$940,000 before the contract was terminated, in part because other Peralta officials questioned the quality of the firm's work.

The board announced this year that Harris' contract will not be renewed when it expires at the end of June.

It was not clear Thursday when the appellate court will rule.

L.A. Community College District gets a new chancellor

LA Times

Daniel LaVista, a state education official from Virginia, is chosen by the district's Board of Trustees to head the nine-campus system.

By Gale Holland
April 17, 2010

The Los Angeles Community College District's Board of Trustees has named a state education official from Virginia to head its nine campuses.

Daniel LaVista, the new chancellor, is executive director of Virginia's Council of Higher Education, which coordinates education efforts for the state's public colleges and universities, a district spokesman said in a statement.

LaVista, 66, will replace Interim Chancellor Tyree Wieder on Aug. 1 at an annual salary of \$370,000.

LaVista said his focus will be on students, particularly those who, for reasons of background or poor schooling, are underprepared to succeed in college.

With 120,000 full-time equivalent students, the district last year awarded about 6,000 degrees and 1,800 certificates, a dispiriting ratio but not an atypical one for two-year colleges, he said.

"Many [students] are impeded in what I call the Bermuda Triangle black hole of remediation," LaVista said in a phone interview.

As the son of an Italian immigrant and his second-generation Italian wife, the upstate New York native said he understands their struggles.

"Years ago, I was similar to them in terms of family financial background, low social and cultural capital," LaVista said.

"When you think about the work of community colleges in America," he added, "none have greater status than those who work with the most needy in terms of preparation and background. . . . I bring a great seriousness of purpose to this job."

Board President Mona Field said LaVista impressed trustees with his breadth of experience.

He has been the president of two community colleges in Illinois and chancellor of the community college system in Baltimore County, Md.

Field said she expects LaVista to be involved in hiring an inspector general to oversee the district's \$5.7-billion bond construction program.

Wieder, the former president of Los Angeles Valley College, came out of retirement to head the district after the June 2009 departure of former Chancellor Marshall Drummond.

LaVista was chosen after a nationwide search.

The Los Angeles Community College District, one of the nation's largest two-year college systems, provides classes for 250,000 students a year at its nine campuses: East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Harbor College, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, Los Angeles Valley College, Pierce College and West Los Angeles College. It also operates a satellite campus in South Gate.

What should be on agenda for community college summit?

USA Today

By David Moltz, Inside Higher Ed

WASHINGTON — Take note, Jill Biden: Community College leaders have a lot they want to talk about at the White House summit you plan to host this fall.

Last month, when President Obama signed the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, he asked the vice president's wife to convene a national conference "to provide an opportunity for community college leaders, students, education experts, business leaders and others to share innovative ways to educate our way to a better economy." Biden, who has been an educator for more than 29 years, teaches English at Northern Virginia Community College.

Even though the \$12 billion American Graduation Initiative was cut from the reconciliation legislation, the final version does include \$2 billion in competitive grant funding for community colleges through 2014. Acknowledging that some federal funding is better than none at all, some community college advocates say summit attendees should brainstorm about ways to supplement what the reconciliation bill had to offer.

George R. Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges, said that President Obama told him at the reconciliation bill signing that he wanted to "build on" the \$2 billion in funding. Given where federal funding stands now for two-year institutions, however, Boggs suggested that "overall theme of the summit should be focused on how we can meet the President's goal to improve education attainment and the key role that community colleges will play." Last summer, the president called for five million more community college graduates by 2020.

"A summit focus on college completion could develop recommendations to identify and remove barriers to program or college completion for students," Boggs added. "We will need to look at ways to improve both college access and student success. (The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act) will likely address the need for continued increases in federal student financial aid, but infrastructure needs, online course delivery support and the innovation and success support that would have been provided by [the American Graduation Initiative] should be reviewed. Also, we need to look at state and federal policies that make it difficult for students to transfer or otherwise complete their goals for colleges to focus on student learning and completion."

Boggs suggested that educators "will be in a better position" to lobby legislators and draw attention to key community college issues in the fall than they were last month amid the bitterly partisan fight over the reconciliation bill. He argued that community colleges enjoy bipartisan support but that Republicans had issues with the student aid bill because of where the money was coming from — the banks. Those issues, he noted, will not be around to hinder discussion in the fall.

Other Washington-based thinkers have broader ideas for the summit's agenda.

Louis Soares, director of the postsecondary education program at the Center for American Progress, argued that if community colleges are to meet the president's goal, changes are needed in how they are held accountable and how they fit within the larger educational system.

"Let's start looking at what we do with existing resources," Soares said. "Community colleges, on a (full-time-equivalent) basis, get less than their four-year colleagues. We need to look at whether or not that difference is justified. If you're getting six grand for English 101 at a community college and your local state land grant (university) is getting nine grand for the same English 101, does that reflect a difference in cost or performance? We need to think more about higher education and getting to the outcomes we need to be at to be productive."

Soares also underscored that the summit would be an ideal time for community college leaders to lobby for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, legislation enacted in 1998 to fund training programs for displaced workers and others who are unemployed. Still, he cautioned that discussing the legislation with community colleges often "gets confusing" and that in-depth debate about revisions to the legislation should not get in the way of any larger discussion of workforce development at the summit.

However, David Bunting, executive director of the Iowa Association for Career and Technical Education, argued that summit participants "cannot separate education from workforce development from economic development" and that discussion about the transfer function of community colleges should not overshadow talk of their skills training programs.

"We always tell career teachers to integrate reading, writing and mathematics into their curriculum, but we never tell, say, English teachers to integrate work skills," Bunting said. "The college-level biology teacher, for instance, should be inspiring students to careers in biology and telling them what's out there for them. When we talk integration, we only think the career-tech (instructors) should do it; the academics should do it, too. Maybe what we need to do is put much more emphasis on what's going to be used."

Though improving student completion and reforming workforce development dominate the talking points of most community college advocates, some leaders expressed hope that other, more specific, concerns will be addressed at the upcoming national summit.

Roy Flores, chancellor of Pima Community College, in Arizona, said education leaders need to take a look at how to reform developmental education. He argued that current policies in many states, such as restrictive funding formulas, do not allow institutions to experiment with nontraditional methods of instruction. He said he would like for states "to shed these rules" and let community colleges "try different things."

Flores also noted that the success (or lack thereof) of minority and other disadvantaged students should not be ignored at the summit.

"All of the data {hellip} tell us we've done a real miserable job educating Hispanics and other minority students," Flores said. "We've a state of affairs such that we're not going to be competitive internationally in terms of graduating folks with bachelor's degrees and other measurements if we don't help these students. I don't think making incremental change is going

to make a difference. {hellip} We need to look at the way education is organized and find out what works and what doesn't. If we don't step it up with Hispanics and other minorities, we'll have a serious, serious problem down the road."

Randy Smith, president of the Rural Community College Alliance, said he would like to ensure that his institutions, most of which have small enrollments, are not overshadowed by urban community colleges, which often have more funding and get more public recognition for their work.

"Many times, rural community colleges are left out or their opinions are not considered," Smith said. "We hope that the forum will recognize the important role the rural community colleges play in American's communities and in our higher education system. Even though rural community colleges may be small, they still serve hundreds of thousands of students and they are an 'anchor' in their communities. The success of the college is critical to the success of a rural community, and we hope that policymakers understand the importance of the community college to the overall economic health of rural communities."

Even professors and students on the ground at Biden's relatively new home institution, Northern Virginia Community College, have a few suggestions for her upcoming summit.

Jim McClellan, dean of liberal studies at the college's Alexandria campus who has taught there for 35 years, said he is most concerned with how to reach millennial students and would like to see this matter discussed broadly.

"The nature of students has changed in the past few years as a result of technology," McClellan said. "We see shorter attention spans. We see students who think there's nothing wrong with texting or using laptops to message back and forth in class. We have students who arrive late and leave early or just don't pay attention at all. I think I slept through most of my junior year of college, but I at least tried to do so conspicuously. I think there's no interest among students to cover up not paying attention in class. How can we teach students who have grown up in this environment and with technologies we just couldn't imagine when we came up?"

Pat Gary, chair of the College Senate and mathematics professor at the college's Manassas campus, said she would like to see national leaders talk about some of the issues that affect community college students day to day.

"The rising cost of textbooks is still a real issue for some of our students," Gary said. "Some of them pay more for textbooks than they do for tuition here. Also, we need to address things like childcare assistance. These are the everyday issues that students are dealing with and struggling with."

Arthur Tamayo, a 20-year-old sophomore and president of the student government at the college's Woodbridge campus, said he hopes that summit will help change the general student perception of community college.

"There's always that notion that community colleges are for people who weren't cut out for college," Tamayo said. "That's just wrong. I definitely think that's an issue that needs to be taken

care of. A lot of emphasis needs to be put on those kids in high school who don't aspire to go to a community college that it may be in their best interest to start out there. If that perception would change, so many more students would have the opportunity to attend college."

Tamayo also noted that more focus needs to be put on explaining the details of transfer to community college students. He said he often sees a disconnect between the advice students are given — to complete an associate's degree before transferring to a four-year institution — and what is sometimes in their best interest — to transfer prior to getting an associate's degree.

Whatever their suggestions for Biden, however, all of the community college advocates noted their optimism about the upcoming summit and its potential to focus Congressional attention on their institutions.

Road to healthcare coverage may have fewer bumps

The overhaul is expected to provide more options for students, young adults and those with preexisting conditions.

LA Times

By Ann M. Simmons, Los Angeles Times

April 26, 2010

On the same day that Daniel Rona qualified for healthcare coverage through his job as an emergency medical technician, an SUV slammed Rona's motorcycle as he was riding in Santa Monica.

He was propelled more than 20 feet and landed on his head, breaking his cervical spine and injuring the frontal lobe of his brain.

The accident occurred on Jan. 18, 2009, three months after Rona had started working for Gerber Ambulance Service. The date also marked the end of the waiting period for him to qualify for employee healthcare insurance, but Rona — then 21 — had not yet signed the paperwork to start the coverage.

The new federal healthcare overhaul could affect Rona in a variety of ways because of his youth and the severity of his injuries.

Ten days in the hospital, including surgery to implant titanium rods into his back, caused Rona's bills to soar to about \$300,000 — an amount he must pay himself. His mother, Rebecca Rona Tuttle, paid about \$100,000 for his aftercare and treatment at a rehabilitation center with money out of her retirement investments.

"If I had insurance, it would have taken care of the whole thing," Rona said. The driver of the SUV paid \$4,500 for Rona's destroyed motorcycle, and her insurance agreed to pay \$15,000 to help cover medical expenses.

During his nine months of recovery, Rona tried to buy private insurance, but was denied coverage. The reason: He was out of work and now had a preexisting condition.

"They wouldn't even allow me to pay a higher premium," Rona said of one of the companies he approached.

Under the new law, however, starting in 2014 insurers will no longer be able to exclude adults with preexisting conditions from being covered.

Rona returned to work at Gerber in September. He pays about \$100 a month for coverage under his employer's group health insurance plan.

But Rona is about to give up that coverage to pursue a dream. He plans to enroll in a nursing program at El Camino College in Torrance in the fall, and his long-term goal is to become a doctor.

Rona would be eligible to apply for COBRA, the federal program that allows former employees to continue with their company's group healthcare benefits for limited periods of time.

But Rona might be required to pay 100% of the premium, plus administrative charges of up to another 10%, said Marian Mulkey, senior program officer at the nonprofit California Healthcare Foundation.

Rona said that continuing to use COBRA would cost him about \$250 a month — not an easily affordable option.

He might be able to get student insurance offered through his college; purchase a short-term health insurance plan for a fixed duration through a company such as eHealthInsurance Services Inc., an online source of health insurance; or get onto his parents' healthcare plan as a dependent, Mulkey said.

Starting this year, the new law will allow children to stay on their parents' policies until they turn 26, as long as they can't obtain insurance through their employer.

"This will have an impact on young adults transitioning into and out of different types of coverage," said Sara Collins, vice president of the New York-based Commonwealth Fund, a nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation focused on improving the healthcare system.

Also, until 2014, people with preexisting conditions will be eligible for a federally funded so-called high-risk insurance program.

Collins said that starting in 2014, individuals who make about \$14,000 a year and four-person families with incomes of about \$29,000 a year — both groups comprise substantial numbers of young adults — would be eligible to enroll in an expanded Medicaid program.

In addition, adults younger than 30 will have the option to buy less expensive catastrophic health insurance.

Rona hopes his stepfather's insurance plan is able to cover him for the expected two-year duration of his college courses, though he would like to be able to afford insurance on his own.

Even before his accident, Rona knew the risks of being uninsured, especially because he rides a motorcycle. Rona said he had tried to obtain temporary insurance to cover the three months before his company's health insurance kicked in, but because he was making \$8.50 an hour he couldn't afford it. Then came his accident.

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This is one in a series of occasional stories on the potential effects of the healthcare overhaul.

**ATM installed at Compton Center
The Compton Bulletin,
April 28, 2010**

Mid-Cities Financial Credit Union has launched a new ATM in the student center at Compton Center. The ATM is part of a new partnership between Mid-Cities Financial Credit Union and Compton Center to deliver more convenience to the school's students. In addition to dispensing for regular ATM and debit cards, the new machine will also dispense cash for Compton Center's financial aid distribution cards. "This will be very beneficial for our students and staff," said Dr. Lawrence M. Cox, CEO of the Compton Community College District. "The central location of the ATM makes it very convenient." The credit union has a unique history with the school, said Mid-Cities President and CEO Melia Keller. "Our original founder, Dr. Roy Strain, was an instructor at the former Compton Community College and ran the credit union out of his home without compensation for many years," she said. The credit union also plans to offer free workshops and seminars to Compton Center students in the near future.