

Community college class wait lists throw a wrench into students' plans

Enrollment in California's colleges has surged, but budget cuts leave many students unable to get the courses they need, meaning it'll take them longer to earn a degree and join the workforce.

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

October 4, 2010

Kiyan Noyes-Aponte landed on the wait list for every class he wanted at Orange Coast College. The 18-year-old graduate of Mission Viejo High School pleaded with professors for a spot, diligently attended lectures and sat on floors in overcrowded classrooms hoping other students would drop out.

Despite his efforts, he managed to enroll in only two classes at the Costa Mesa campus, enough for part-time status. And he was luckier than many.

Students registering at California community colleges this fall are facing unprecedented hurdles, as campuses have slashed classes in response to budget cuts. At the same time, enrollment has surged, fueled by the largest high school graduating class in the state's history, older workers returning to school for job training and more students being unable to get into the state's four-year universities.

Unlike the University of California and California State University, the state's 112 community colleges — the largest such network in the nation — are expected to enroll all comers. But officials say thousands of students are effectively being turned away because they can't get classes. Others like Noyes-Aponte, who'd hoped to attend full time, are having to settle for part-time enrollment or are taking courses at several campuses to cobble together the 12 units needed for full-time status.

Educators say they are concerned that many students may have to stay in college years longer to obtain their degrees or will drop out and not return.

"I want to be successful, but I don't know if I'm going to be able to reach my goals," said Noyes-Aponte, a mechanical engineering major who is now working part time at a manufacturing firm. He ended up with just a chemistry course and a self-paced trigonometry class with no instructor. "I was scared and stressed. I was literally desperate for classes."

Officials said they sympathize with Noyes-Aponte and others like him but are hamstrung by state funding reductions. In the 2009-10 school year, the community college system sustained \$520 million in cuts, about 8% of its overall budget.

"We do the best we can with the scarce resources we have, but we can't give enough individual attention to students because we don't have the support staff we once had," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott. "Most astute individuals are saying we're doing some damage here and to the economy of California."

Scott said his office estimates that about 140,000 potential students did not enroll in community colleges last year because they could not get into classes. That number is expected to be even higher this year.

Scott pointed to grim scenarios up and down the state.

In the nine-college Los Angeles Community College District, course sections are down about 3% from last fall, with larger class sizes as a result, officials said. Entering students, with low priority at registration, typically have the toughest time.

"Continuing students may have been more successful in obtaining a full schedule, while new students are probably less likely to be able to enroll in all of the classes they would like," said George Prather, senior research analyst for the district.

In the Los Rios Community College District, which includes four Sacramento-area colleges, 850 classes were cut this fall, and the remaining 6,500 course sections all had wait lists.

On the first day of registration at Bakersfield College, more than 3,000 students registered in the first hour, crashing the computer system, said spokeswoman Amber Chiang. The school was one of the few to add classes this fall — 27 sections in subjects including math, English and history — but still had 13,000 students on wait lists, 13% more than last fall. Many are older students returning for job training, she said.

Some students are going to extraordinary lengths to get classes.

Elyery Landavazo attended El Camino College Compton Center last year, but this fall almost all of the classes he wanted were full and had long waiting lists. He said he could take two classes at the Compton campus and two others at Long Beach City College or try to find four classes at one campus. He chose the latter and is now at Los Angeles City College, an hour and a half by bus and rail from his South Gate home.

It could be worse. One of his best friends is taking one class at Santa Monica College, another at Pasadena City College and two more at the Long Beach campus.

"I take a bus to the Metro station and then the Blue Line to the Red Line, but at least I get to do my homework on the way," said Landavazo, 21, who estimates that with class availability so iffy, it may take him two more semesters to get the credits he needs to transfer to a UC campus. "Last year I signed up for classes a month before school started and had no problem getting into any of them. It's way harder this year."

Anticipating the bleak budget picture and the effect it would have on its 45,000 students, the San Mateo County Community College District in June became the first in the state to pass a parcel tax to boost class offerings and hire back part-time faculty.

The \$34 annual tax will raise \$6 million to \$7 million over four years but was approved too late to help students this fall. The election was closely monitored by other community college districts as a means of reducing dependence on state general funds.

"We're the last place for students who aren't able to fit into UC or CSU, and we felt we couldn't sit back and fail to be proactive about them," said Patricia Miljanich, president of the district's board of trustees. "But even doing what we've done, we know there are still going to be students who are not going to get classes."

At Orange Coast, administrators have sought to prioritize, preserving basic skills and technical education courses, as well as classes students need in order to transfer, said President Dennis Harkins. But like many other campuses, the college has eliminated its January intersession for two years running and reduced summer classes by half.

"It's causing us to reexamine the way we provide services," Harkins said. "We have to be strategic about making decisions in the hopes of serving as many students as possible."

Nora Aponte-Woodring, Noyes-Aponte's mother, said she had trouble believing that her son was having such a tough time getting classes until she visited the campus and spoke with officials. Aponte-Woodring, a mother of four, had attended community college herself and earned a degree in microbiology at UC Davis. She returned to school and is now a law student at Whittier College. She says she never encountered the barriers now facing her son.

"It's our job to guide them to adulthood, but now we're telling them that there's no place for them in schools," she said. "It's going to be a big impediment in their lives."

For his part, Noyes-Aponte said he is counting on an earlier registration date next semester. "I'm going to be fight

CSUDH gives digital textbooks a try

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/02/2010 11:01:29 PM PDT

As if runaway tuition fees during a down economy weren't bad enough, college students are taking it on the chin from another expense that can't seem to stop going skyward: textbooks.

A recent study by the California State University system estimates that textbooks cost the average student about \$800 a year. Not only this, sticker prices are rising to the tune of 7percent annually.

This year, California State University, Dominguez Hills is taking a stand.

The Carson campus is among six of CSU's 23 locations to take part in a pilot program in which students, beginning this year, are able to purchase digital textbooks for temporary use. The program is analogous to Netflix in that digital access to the books is temporary: At the end of the semester, students "return" their books as their passwords expire.

Called the digital licensing program, the effort offers a glimpse into the future of using college materials.

In a nutshell, the sight of students lugging lumpy backpacks on campus may become less commonplace as increasing numbers of them access their course materials via laptop computer, iPad or smart phone. The digital-rental option generally cuts costs by 65percent and is just one of an emerging array of alternatives.

Some are free. These include "checking out" digital books from campus libraries or using open-source materials posted online by professors.

The growing menu of digital possibilities accounts for how student Jackie Hill - a political science major at Dominguez Hills - was able to purchase her books this semester for just \$200 rather than the expected \$500.

The \$300 savings was a major help to the recent Westchester High graduate. To make ends meet, the full-time student works 20 hours a week at Macy's department store and another 10 hours a week at a nonprofit organization.

"I didn't come from a wealthy family with much financial support," said Hill, one of five siblings, whose father died when she was young and whose mother recently retired as a teacher's assistant.

Students at CSU campuses this year already were hit with a 5percent increase in tuition, which now costs \$4,230 annually. That's on top of an even larger increase the year before.

As for the new textbook options, not all of them are technological. In fact, the one that has arguably gathered the most steam nationwide this year enables students to rent old-fashioned, physical textbooks from the bookstore.

Under the textbook-rental program - which began this fall at both Dominguez Hills and Loyola Marymount University in Westchester - students can check out textbooks from the campus bookstore the same way they would from a library. The difference is, students take the book for an entire semester, not a few weeks, and reserve the right to mark up the margins with a pen. The cost is generally about half the price of the brand-new book.

"We feel it's been a huge success," said Raymond Dennis, associate vice president of auxiliary management and business services at LMU. "We were able to rent 6,000 titles this semester, saving students a total of \$150,000."

The driving force behind the textbook-rental option is the Follett Corp., the Chicago-based company that operates the bookstores at 865 campuses across the nation, including both Cal State Dominguez Hills and Loyola Marymount.

It piloted the program last year at seven campuses. This year, the company launched the program at 730 campuses nationwide.

"We're really trying to push the message of choice," said Elio Distaola, director of campus relations for Follett. "In just three weeks, we've rented more than 1.1 million units. It's obviously an attractive option."

But the CSU system has developed one alternative to new textbooks that companies such as Follett might not be so fond of.

This option is essentially an organized website of coursework created and posted by the professors themselves. The materials are free to not only students but also any member of the public with an interest in the topic.

The site, called Merlot.org, is akin to the free software created as part of the "open source" movement that gave rise to phenomena like Wikipedia, which certainly wasn't good for the encyclopedia industry.

"Twenty years ago, a professor couldn't produce a textbook," said Gerry Hanley, executive director of Merlot.org and the CSU system's senior director for academic technology services. "Now, the content experts can also be the authors as well."

Merlot.org material ranges from electronic calculators to self-published textbooks to entire courses - videotaped lectures and all. Professors often use the material in lieu of textbooks.

Merlot.org was created in 1997 by CSU professors but the site has recently snowballed. Last year alone, it grew by 30 percent, and now enrolls some 87,000 members and includes submissions from university professors the world over.

But why would a professor want to spend time writing a book for free?

"Why do people blog? They want to build a reputation," said Hanley, who works out of California State University, Long Beach. "Also, we'll just call it the generosity gene. In education a lot of it is about sharing knowledge."

Distaola said Follett is indeed watching the open-source movement closely, but added that it has a long way to go before it catches up with the traditional textbook industry.

"If a program in the end is going to benefit the student, it's a good thing," he said.

Meanwhile, costly textbooks are also bedeviling students at El Camino College near Torrance.

Moon Ichinaga, a librarian at the two-year community college, said the number of students opting to check out is clearly on the rise.

"The number of students has increased exponentially," she said. "At the same time, our ability to fund those textbooks has been hampered."

The El Camino library lacks the resources to carry all the textbooks in use, she said. In addition, students there can only check out textbooks for two hours at a time and cannot remove them from the premises.

In any event, for all the intriguing new options, the vast majority of students still purchase their textbooks the old-fashioned way, shelling out hundreds of dollars for hard-copy bound books.

Some prefer it.

Dominguez Hills student Ruben Medina last semester spent \$60 on an e-book for his general physics class. The hardcover version cost \$120.

"The only thing that isn't as great as a real book is that you can't open it up anywhere without a computer or device that can open e-books," he said in an e-mail. "Basically, without an electronic device it's useless."

But it's safe to say most just don't know any other way.

Hill, the Westchester High grad, said her government instructor informed the class about how e-books for the class could be purchased online. But by then it was already too late.

"A lot of people generally found out about the e-books after they bought their books," she said.

To learn more about the CSU project, go to <http://als.csu/projects.org/>.

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Staff writer John Guenther contributed to this article.

ECC plans to appeal sanctioned forfeits

The Daily Breeze

By Dave Thorpe, Staff Writer

Posted: 10/06/2010 11:59:37 PM PDT

The El Camino College football team may have to forfeit its first four wins of the season, but it's not going down without a fight.

A day after Southern California Football Association commissioner Jim Sartoris announced El Camino reported an ineligible player participated in the team's first four games and those wins are now forfeited, El Camino Athletic Director Tony Barbone said the program is holding out hope for a reversal.

"We plan to submit an appeal to the commissioner by the end of the week, and we expect a decision by the commissioner by the end of the month," Barbone said.

Barbone said ECC was led to believe by the player's former college that he is still technically a freshman, and he was academically eligible under freshman guidelines. But after researching the matter, ECC learned the player is actually a sophomore, and is ineligible under sophomore guidelines.

"The information we were given by his former institution was incorrect," Barbone said. "Once we discovered it, we checked with the institution and they said it was correct. But we did research and discovered the information was wrong and he was deemed ineligible."

Barbone said he will not release the name of the player or his former college.

El Camino football might forfeit 4 victories

School will appeal, but ineligible player likely drops Warriors to 0-5

From staff reports

Posted: 10/05/2010 11:41:44 PM

It looks like the El Camino College football team may have to forfeit its four victories this season for using an ineligible player, according to Southern California Football Association commissioner Jim Sartoris.

Sartoris stated in an e-mail to the SCFA membership that "the El Camino Athletic Administration has reported that an ineligible player has participated in the first four football games of the 2010 season. Therefore, these games are forfeited as per Article 7.4.12.3 of the CCCAA/COA Constitution.

"Games played on September 4, 11, 18, and 25 are declared forfeitures. Overall season records will be adjusted for El Camino and their opponents. Individual statistics for these games will not be modified."

El Camino officials said they will not comment on the matter but the school does plan to appeal the decision.

The forfeited games include victories against L.A. Southwest, Grossmont, Golden West, and Harbor colleges. El Camino beat Southwest, 56-7, then went on to defeat Grossmont, 21-14, Golden West, 34-7, and Harbor, 56-37.

Last Saturday, El Camino suffered its only loss on the field this season, falling to Palomar, 25-21.

El Camino is slated to play at College of the Canyons on Oct. 16. The Warriors have a bye this week.

Just like NCAA rules, forfeited victories in completed games are recorded by a final score of 1-0 in game statistics and conference reports.

El Camino forfeits four games

By WAVE STAFF

Thursday, October 7, 2010

El Camino College's football team has had to forfeit four nonconference wins, the Southern California Football Association commissioner Jim Sartoris announced.

In an email sent to the SCFA membership, Sartoris stated:

"The El Camino Athletic Administration has reported that an ineligible player has participated in the first four football games of the 2010 season. Therefore, these games are forfeited as per Article 7.4.12.3 of the CCCAA/COA Constitution.

"Games played on Sept. 4, 11, 18, and 25 are declared forfeitures. Overall season records will be adjusted for El Camino and their opponents. Individual statistics for these games will not be modified."

The forfeited games includes contests against L.A. Southwest, Grossmont, Golden West, and L.A. Harbor. Per NCAA rules, forfeited wins in completed games are recorded by a final score of 1-0 in game statistics and conference reports.

Players of the Week

L.A. Southwest College running back Ezekiel Graham has been named the American Division Pacific Conference special teams/all-purpose player of the week for his performance against Santa Barbara.

The freshman from Carson High School carried 21 times for 184 yards, including scoring runs of 25 and 70 yards, and returned five kickoffs for 77 yards in a 26-21 loss to Santa Barbara.

Teammate Sedrole Clevril was nominated for the defensive award.

The sophomore linebacker from Manual Arts was in on 10 tackles, six of them solo, had an interception and a fumble recovery.

East L.A. wide receiver Michael Allen is the American Division Mountain Conference special teams/all-purpose player of the week after a sterling effort in a 31-17 loss to Antelope Valley.

The Lynwood High product had four kick returns for 83 yards, including a long one of 30.

Teammates Mitchell Garner and Darion Green-Simpson were also nominees for weekly honors.

Garner, a linebacker, had seven tackles (five solo) and Green-Simpson caught eight passes for 71 yards.

L.A. Harbor linebacker Delano Cook won the Central Division West Conference defensive player of the week honor after recording 12 tackles, including four for loss, and forcing a fumble at Harbor's one-yard line in a 31-24 loss to Golden West. The Carson grad also had a sack.

Cerritos' David Arteaga is the special teams/all-purpose player of the week in the National Division Northern Conference.

Arteaga, a linebacker, had nine tackles (four solo), two sacks and a forced fumble in the Falcons' 28-24 loss to Saddleback.

Governor signs bill easing transfers from junior colleges to CSU

By Dana Bartholomew Staff Writers

Posted: 10/04/2010 06:57:01 PM

Community college students have been forced for decades to juggle classes to meet the unique transfer requirements of each California four-year university.

No more.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation Monday to allow students to obtain a one-size-fits-all transfer degree for all 23 California State University campuses. A similar law is proposed for transfers to the University of California.

"Today is a great day to celebrate," Schwarzenegger told a packed hall of more than 1,000 professors, students and California university officials at Los Angeles Mission College in Sylmar.

"We have to make those four-year degrees easier to obtain, not by lowering standards, but by terminating these bureaucratic roadblocks."

Authored by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima, Senate Bill 1440 guarantees community college students can transfer to any Cal State university after earning an associate degree.

The law, which goes into effect next year, will allow students to go on to such schools as CSU Long Beach and Dominguez Hills after obtaining 60 semester units of study.

With the average student taking 20 units more than needed to transfer - and lacking just 42 units for a bachelor's degree - the law will shorten the time to graduation, state officials say.

It will also save \$160 million a year in wasted classroom time.

The law is designed to speed up graduations and provide access to 55,000 more college

students. A pending bill, Assembly Bill 2302, aims to streamline student transfers into the UC system.

"For our economy to succeed, we need the best educated work force possible," Padilla said. "We know we can do it, but the bureaucracy must get out of the way."

Padilla said only a quarter of all community college students go on to four-year schools. Among blacks and Latinos, transfers number only 10 percent.

As the so-called "community college governor" prepared to sign Padilla's bill, a hush fell over the cavernous hall.

Then when Schwarzenegger worked his pen next to California Community College President Jack Scott and Cal State University Chancellor Charles Reed, the room exploded in applause.

"I'm incredibly happy - astounded that this is happening right now," said Christopher Silva, 20, of Sylmar, who plans to study philosophy at Cal State Northridge or USC in preparation for a law degree.

OBAMA ANNOUNCES PRIVATE EFFORTS TO BOOST COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Story Published: Oct 7, 2010 at 11:41 AM PDT

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Tuesday announced additional, private funding for cash-strapped community colleges in an effort to bridge the growing degree gap between the [United States](#) and other nations.

At the first-ever White House Summit on Community [Colleges](#), Obama said the the United States' decade-long decline from first to ninth in the world in the percentage of young people holding college degrees “not only represents a huge waste of potential; in the global marketplace it represents a threat to our position as the world's leading economy.”

The aim of the summit was to explore ways to reach Obama's goal of an additional 5 million community [college degrees](#) by 2020, and to discuss community colleges' role in developing the U.S. work force, according to the White House. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, hosted of the summit. She has a doctorate and is a full-time English professor at a community college.

One private funding initiative comes from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which plans to invest \$34.8 million over the next five years for a program called Completion by Design. The money will come in the form of grants to groups of community colleges that come up with new ways to make the college experience more responsive to the needs of today's students, according to a statement on the foundation's website.

“Most students today who are pursuing an education beyond high school are also balancing the demands of work and family,” Melinda Gates said in the statement, “yet colleges haven't adapted to this new reality.”

Also announced was the creation of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, a \$1 million award for community colleges that have outstanding academic and work force outcomes.

Attending the summit were some 150 people, including community college leaders, students, philanthropists and businesspeople, as well as state and federal policy leaders.

Community colleges across the United States have seen enrollment figures jump by 24 percent over the past few years, as unemployed workers look to retrain at those institutions, which offer lower tuition compared to their four-year counterparts.

But the recession has forced some of those colleges to cut back on course offerings and put limits on enrollment. Recent figures from the Department of Education show that only about 30 percent of students who begin a two-year associates degree program actually finish up in three years.

The need for more educated workers was highlighted in a recent study by the Center for Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University. The study projects that by the year 2018, the United States will need around 22 million workers with new post-secondary degrees, associate degrees or better. The actual number of such workers is expected to fall short by about 3 million.

The community colleges summit also includes a session on the Skills for America's Future initiative, the launching of which the president announced Monday at a meeting with his Economic Recovery Advisory Board. The initiative will make available more than \$2 billion in competitive funds to community colleges over the next four years, the White House said in a statement.

Examples of programs in the new initiative include Pacific Gas and Electric's work with community colleges to develop courses and training for energy jobs, professional literacy courses provided by [McDonald's](#) for managers across the country, and a pilot job training program in seven cities by Gap Inc., the statement said.

A White House statement said the initiative is based on the same concept as the Educate to Innovate campaign, in which corporations develop specific programs to boost the performance of U.S. students in math, science, technology and engineering.

Obama said a Skills for America's Future task force will coordinate federal efforts with corporate partners in the initiative.

"The goal is to ensure there are strong partnerships between growing industries and community college or training programs in every state in the country," Obama said.

El Camino quarrels over grant

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/09/2010 07:13:53 AM PDT

Updated: 10/09/2010 10:34:20 PM PDT

It isn't often that a school turns away money from the federal government. But it happened at El Camino College near Torrance. And now the faculty's union - as well as at least one elected school board member - are up in arms.

The dispute centers on a \$180,000, two-year grant offered by the U.S. Department of Education that would have sent a handful of students and some faculty to Europe for a student-exchange program focused on early childhood development.

Administrators chalk up the quarrel to a simple misunderstanding about a grant that amounts to a slim fraction of the millions of dollars the college receives from grants every year.

But the flare-up seems to highlight a fault line between faculty and the administration - and in particular college President Thomas Fallo - at a community college campus known for running a tight financial ship.

"It's autocratic, this kind of decision-making," said Elizabeth Shadish, a philosophy professor and the president of the El Camino faculty union. "Here we were, developing an educational program and Tom Fallo cuts it off at the knee. I'm just puzzled."

Back in April, faculty from the childhood-education department applied for the so-named "Atlantis" grant. At the time, it appeared they'd had Fallo's blessing. Attached to the application was a letter signed and apparently written by him.

"Building international capacity in the teaching field reflects a compelling national interest

and need," Fallo wrote in the letter. "Future teachers at El Camino College and the professors who help prepare them are ready and willing to address it."

This summer, members of the childhood-education department were pleased to learn they were awarded the grant; they'd tried the year before but were turned down by the federal government.

But last month, administrators informed the department that it could not accept the money. The reason: The grant paid for faculty to travel internationally, and the college - owing to the state budget crisis - banned international travel last school year.

"We're baffled and perplexed and disappointed," said Janet Young, a professor of early childhood education, who was one of the grant's primary authors. "We see ourselves as professionals. The president signed off on it. I'm perplexed and very disappointed as a professional."

Young said the grant would have caused her to miss five days of school. It also would have paid her a stipend of \$2,000.

Administrators say they didn't realize the grant involved international travel when they signed off on it. They add that it isn't productive to send faculty abroad in the middle of the school year, when doing so benefits only a handful of students.

"It's a wonderful program in that a couple of students would get to go to Europe," said Francisco Arce, the college's vice president of academic affairs. "On the other hand, we have thousands of students."

He noted that some of the travel would have occurred in October 2011.

"That's right in the middle of the semester," he said.

Fallo declined to be interviewed for this article, deferring all questions to Arce.

Faculty union fights back

After the grant was turned down, grumblings through the grapevine brought word of the situation to Shadish of the faculty union. She in turn brought the informal complaint to college board member Maureen O'Donnell.

A former Torrance school board member and city councilwoman known for asking tough questions, O'Donnell's El Camino candidacy was supported by the faculty in 2005, when she ran unopposed.

On Sept. 7, O'Donnell brought up the issue with Fallo at the college's regular board meeting. Last week, she said his reaction left her peeved.

"I requested information about the Atlantis grant, and asked Fallo why he wanted to rescind participation," she said. "All he would say is `Because of information I have learned.'"

The Daily Breeze obtained a CD recording of the meeting, but the recording cuts out just as O'Donnell begins to ask about the grant, which happened toward the end of the meeting just before adjournment.

O'Donnell said when she pressed him further, Fallo suggested that she read it online.

"He began to deride me for not using a computer," she said.

O'Donnell said she found the exchange particularly irksome because she and the rest of the board function as Fallo's boss.

"Dr. Fallo is, after all, an employee of the board," she said. "In the corporate world, an employee who would refuse the reasonable request by an employer would be fired instantly."

Other board members didn't seem to share O'Donnell's level of pique.

School board President Ray Gen said he doesn't believe the issue should have risen to the level of the college board.

"This should have been worked out way before it got to this point," he said. "Otherwise we're micro-managing every decision - who goes on what field trip, which teams our football team is going to play. We're supposed to set policy."

But he added: "Somewhere the communications fell apart."

School board member Bill Beverly said he doesn't have enough information on the matter to pick sides.

"I'm hoping by the next board meeting (on Oct. 18) to have a full report," he said. "Until then I can't say it's a big issue or it's not."

El Camino administrators say the dust-up has caused them to revise the review process for grant applications.

They reject the criticism from the union that El Camino's refusal to accept the money could jeopardize the school's ability to land grants from the U.S. Department of Education in the future.

To buttress their point, administrators cited examples such as a \$3 million, five-year federal grant that will focus on improving the graduation rate, and a \$1.3 million, five-year federal grant to bolster math and science education, particularly for disadvantaged students.

Rejection is a first

As for the Atlantis grant, the federal administrator, Frank Frankfort of the U.S. Department of Education, said this is the first time a school has turned down the award.

"We funded 25 projects this year," he said in an e-mail. "Beyond that I have no comment."

The Atlantis grant clusters colleges in groups of four. El Camino was to partner with California State University, Dominguez Hills; University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy; and the University of Valencia in Spain.

El Camino has since been replaced by the Kern Community College District in Bakersfield.

Each college selects four students to participate. Over the course of the program, the students spend time at other schools within the cluster.

Young, the childhood-education professor who helped write the grant, said the goal is to create a more global track of future teachers.

"We have a commitment to provide our students with tools to help in the increasingly global 21st century workplace," she said.

She added that the Italian school would have been especially enlightening, as it is recognized worldwide for its approach to early childhood education. The "Reggio Emilia" philosophy, for instance, calls for children to have some control over the direction of their learning, and to learn through experiences of "touching, moving, listening, seeing and hearing."

Oddly, of the 25 institutions in the United States to receive the grant, El Camino was the only two-year college until Kern accepted.

"This would have put us on the map a little bit here," Young said.

Will Technology Kill the Academic Calendar?

The Chronicle of Higher Education

October 10, 2010

Online, semesters give way to students who set their own schedules

By Marc Parry

Ford T. Smith is helping to bulldoze one of the most durable pillars of academic life: the semester.

An adjunct faculty member at Kentucky's Jefferson Community & Technical College, Mr. Smith teaches in an online program that lets students start class any day they want and finish at their own speed. One student, desperate to graduate, knocked off 113 quizzes and six writing assignments for a humanities course in 46 sleepless hours.

But there is a downside to this convenience, and it's deeper than bleary eyes. The open format of Jefferson's program, called Learn Anytime, means students don't move through classes in groups. None of Mr. Smith's 400 online students will have a discussion or do a group project with classmates.

It's a controversial approach to online education—one that is gaining traction at some colleges. Supporters see the self-paced model as a means to serve more students, since no one is turned away because of a full section, missed deadline, or canceled class. Others criticize go-it-alone learning as a second-rate system that leaves students in greater danger of dropping out.

"Educationally, it's not defensible," says D. Randy Garrison, a veteran distance-education researcher who directs the Teaching & Learning Centre at the University of Calgary. "It doesn't allow students to get a deep understanding of the content."

Regardless of criticism like that, the model is spreading. Its former champion within Jefferson's administration, Robert Johnson, plans to make open-entry courses the default for a new online program he leads at the Louisiana Community & Technical College system. At Arizona's Rio Salado College, home to one of America's largest online programs, self-paced classes start every Monday. Others that teach this way include StraighterLine, a company that provides online courses, and Athabasca University, a distance-education institution in Canada.

With so much tied to semesters, innovators who adopt open-entry courses may be in for a bureaucratic migraine. Administrative software struggles to handle them. Professors who offer them sacrifice normal vacations; Mr. Johnson has taught a theater-appreciation course continuously for more than 1,000 days.

Most worrisome, Jefferson officials urge students not to enroll in open-entry courses if they receive financial aid. Their course work might straddle two traditional terms, and the lack of a grade posted for the previous term could endanger continuing aid, says Joshua Smith, the college's executive director for e-learning initiatives.

But the format also offers opportunity to entrepreneurial professors willing to log extreme hours.

The \$120,000-a-Year Adjunct

Ford Smith teaches three classes at Jefferson: English 101 and 102 and Introduction to Humanities. With no due dates and students popping in daily, that feels more like coordinating 400 independent studies.

He asks students not to call between midnight and 6 a.m.; otherwise, he's mostly working. He tells two stories that sound apocryphal, but which he insists are true. One: During his wife's labor, Mr. Smith was e-mailing a student and writing a tutorial on "monophony" and "polyphony" while urging her to push. Two: He calls his daughter "Angel," after a course-management system. (Her real name is Angelica; his wife wasn't keen on naming their child for a piece of software.)

Obsession pays. Learn Anytime professors aren't compensated per class. They're compensated per student—\$65 a head. By taking advantage of that system and adding other teaching gigs, Mr. Smith earns an annual paycheck that tenured professors might envy: \$120,000.

"In Kentucky, that's just unheard of," he says.

How It Works

Other than programs like Learn Anytime, online education generally mimics the familiar face-to-face template. A group of students moves through course work at a set pace and discusses the lessons, typically in a course forum.

Jefferson's effort to break that mold grew out of a dual-credit project with a local public-school system. Since 2007, Learn Anytime has exploded from a couple of hundred students to nearly 1,300.

The two-year college, based in Louisville, Kentucky's largest city, now runs about 25 start-anytime courses. They're typically high-demand, introductory classes in subjects like English, economics, math, physics, psychology, and computers.

The Chronicle got a feel for the quirks of these never-ending courses when a reporter met with Mr. Johnson at a Starbucks in Baton Rouge, La., recently. As a Jefferson administrator, he had led the development of Learn Anytime, and he still teaches the theater-appreciation course for the Kentucky college despite his new job in Louisiana.

Mr. Johnson's classroom isn't just virtual. It's also largely automated. After he logs in on his laptop, a counter pops up to show students the number of days remaining for them to complete the class (120 is now the maximum, down from 150). Quizzes are self-grading. Completion of one task triggers the next. Submission of an assignment sends an alert to Mr. Johnson's iPhone. The course software e-mails students "personalized" advice, programmed by Mr. Johnson, throughout the class. "Dear Tom," it might say. "Let me give you some tips about how to do the next lesson."

And the students? A dashboard tells Mr. Johnson that one logged in Friday. But ask him how many are in the course, which has run in this format since 2007, and he isn't immediately sure. He laughs.

"Isn't that sad?" he says. "I can't remember ever sitting down and counting. I just treat them as individuals as they pass through."

If you're thinking this feels like a misguided way to teach, that's nothing new to Mr. Johnson. How, some professors ask, can you teach without discussion? Without a cohort?

His view is that not much learning takes place among students in an online course. They often just don't read the forum conversation, he says. Sure, they might add their own comments to a discussion board, he says, "but they don't really benefit from what others are saying."

They do benefit from the feedback he gives in self-paced courses, Mr. Johnson says, because instead of slogging through 25 homework assignments at once, he focuses on each student's work as it trickles in. He is fanatic about not making them wait. Once, while giving a PowerPoint presentation to a group of college administrators, the iPhone at his hip buzzed to alert him that a

student had finished a lesson. During the break, while everyone else was having coffee, he graded it.

"I'm a much better teacher than I was in a cohort," he says. "Each student gets my individual attention."

In some ways, self-paced online courses are a throwback to the days when learning at a distance meant corresponding by mail. Over the years, completion rates for independent learners have generally been lower than for those studying in groups, according to experts both for and against self-paced study. One calls the format "a procrastinator's heaven." At Jefferson, however, the data do not show a falloff in completion for Learn Anytime courses.

Still, Mr. Garrison, the Calgary researcher, is suspicious of the format. He thinks its adoption is driven by financial, not educational, needs. To learn deeply, he says, students should have their ideas and assumptions challenged. They need freedom to explore ideas with other students, without the pressure of the instructor judging every comment.

"Historically, we've always shown that persistence is directly related to the degree of interaction and engagement in a course of studies," he says. "When a professor has 400 students, there's not very much interaction, even with a professor."

'There Was No Learning'

One of Mr. Smith's former students at Jefferson, Vicki A. Smith, praises his responsiveness and doesn't mind solitary study. Her view typifies the just-get-it-done attitude of many self-paced students.

Ms. Smith, 48, has gone back to college for a nursing degree. One of her program's prerequisites is English 101, a course she skipped years ago when she got her bachelor's at the University of Kentucky. Rather than put up a fight—she had taken English 102 there—she signed up for Mr. Smith's self-paced course.

She found it "unbelievably" easy. Assigned a research paper, she expected to write at least 10 pages; turned out she had to hand in only two or three. "There was no learning," she says. "It was total remedial."

Told of her experience, Joshua Smith, Jefferson's e-learning director, says Ms. Smith appears to be an "atypical student," since she had already earned a degree. He emphasizes that all courses

must teach the same "competencies" for their discipline, and that all syllabi must be approved, regardless of course format.

"The feedback I have received from students does not suggest that the course curriculum is any easier in Learn Anytime courses," he says in an e-mail. "Given the (unfortunate) 40% completion rate for ENG101 in the spring '10 term, I would tend to agree."

Vicki Smith's bottom line: Peer collaboration would matter in a higher-level class. Not in one like this.

But can you have both interaction and independent study? The answer may be yes, through social networking.

If there are enough students, those at the same point in a course can study together on a Facebook-like system, says Terry Anderson, an Athabasca professor who does research about distance education.

It's happening. Athabasca University is experimenting with a platform called Elgg. Rio Salado students connect in an online student union. OpenStudy offers another platform.

"The next frontier in online learning," says Mr. Anderson, "is to merge the social stuff with the self-paced stuff."

BLOG POSTS IN RESPONSE TO "PROCESS TO ACCREDITATION" DOCUMENT

Hub City Living

1. **MD/Hub:** So if all goes well, the college will regain accreditation in 4-6 years. At least that what it reads like to me. Interesting that in 2 years, when the eligibility proposal is submitted, if rejected, the entire process starts again. This all sounds like a very complex process and I hope all those involved receive the support needed to make it successful.
It does say proposed plan however.....anyone know when it goes from proposal to approved plan?
2. **Joe Lewis:** Hello All: I am interested in knowing if anyone cares that Compton Community College District will be no more. A recent survey facilitated by a contracted research firm indicated that a random sample of people (63%) said that they feel the Compton Community College Campus should remain El Camino College. And, that they would rather have El Camino College name on their degree. Is this how everyone else feel? Has this 78 year old institution run its course? Is Compton ready and willing to let its name sake traditional Community College go? Is local control important to the community stakeholders and student user groups? The answers to these questions will help me understand how others feel; and indicate whether or not it is worth fighting to keep Compton College whole.
Joseph Lewis, President
Federation of Classified Employees, Local 3486
Compton Community College District
3. **Pamela Richardson:** feel that from meeting them, some of the instructors there are not teaching at a college level. I sat in on a class, and I thought that I was in someone's backyard being taught. The grammar used to instruct was not of a college professor in my opinion. Hopefully El Camino retains control, and some of the personnel there are replaced with more educated instructors.
4. **Cindy:** Stay the course. Return Compton College as promised to the community. If some love the name El Camino, remind them it is just a short drive away...and where were they when others mounted the fight for the return of Compton College. Would El Camino give up local governance or it's name for a perceived better one such as UCLA or Santa Monica College? No. Community pride is at stake and a revitalized college would vastly improve Compton's rebirth and image. Or should everyone in or ever from "Compton" walk around with their heads held down because it is not the "right" name. Perhaps people should change their birth certificates to Carson from Compton because "They" think it looks better. If you cannot fight for who you are, improve, grow and get better versus selling out and becoming another, then what do we tell the children of Compton? Be proud of who you are and where you come from up to the 12th grade, then become ashamed, put the name "Compton" aside, lose the fight to retain and enhance your own college, and embrace another community with pride in it's college that would never let you run them. There are not many institutions with the name "Compton" that bring the community

pride. The college has done so for sixty plus years before the dark days. The idea was to restore Compton College to its former brilliance and let it shine again for its people

5. **MD/Hub:** I am torn between the 2. It would be the worst thing for the college to return to local control and have the progress and improvements not continue. I am not saying that's what will happen but just thinking that much of what has happened regarding, has come as a direct result of the partnership. Please correct me if I'm wrong. I think the only way to really answer your question Mr. Lewis, is to ask what is more valuable to the community: Pride of local ownership or expanded opportunities for students?

6. **Cindy:** You are wrong on one major assumption. El Camino College IS NOT the major reason for the improvements, even though they often like to take all the credit in the press. Dr. Lawrence Cox of Compton College is directly responsible for the physical improvements to the campus such as the bookstore, cafeteria, the gym and improvements in the grounds. The multimillion dollar bond voted by the Compton College communities before El Camino ever took over is responsible for the renovation of existing, and the building of new facilities. The faculty of Compton College was the driving force behind getting intervention on the campus, and has taken on the lionshare of improving academics with the goal of re-accreditation in mind. The state of California has vested millions to pay El Camino who is making millions on the deal. This was done specifically due to the state's desire to rehabilitate and save Compton College, not to give El Camino a second campus. The citizens of Compton, Carson, Paramount and Lynwood are responsible for fighting for exactly the improvements being implemented and have vigorously voiced their desire to restore Compton College. Again, pride of ownership, expanding the educational opportunities of our students, and having a quality education possible even in Compton, should not be considered mutually exclusive. Why do you think one or the other can be accomplished but not both under Compton College. Compton College was not always in trouble and those responsible for its woes are now gone. For example, the United States is now currently facing owing billions and has experienced the failure of both Main and Wall Street. But the solution is to acknowledge the problems, make improvements, and do the hard work to restore our country to its former glory. No one is suggesting that since we hit a bad spot, we can't improve and go forward to a better tomorrow reminiscent of our former glory. Compton College survived 70 plus years before El Camino ever came into the picture. The greatest insult is that some have obviously signed on to the premise that NOTHING GOOD can come from Compton, or that improvements are not possible under the leadership of anything from Compton. El Camino is not waving a magic wand and, poof, Compton College is magically being transformed. Dr. Lawrence Cox, the faculty, the union, the citizens, the state of California, the bond money, are working overtime, night and day, to make the improvements necessary to improve the campus. This is all being done ultimately with our students in mind and to restore Compton College, not to make our college a footnote and just a second campus for El Camino College. 100% of everyone I know who were fighting to keep the doors open want the college restored. I don't know who "they" or this supposed 68% that want El Camino to remain are, but one thing I can tell you, is the devil is a liar, and you got to keep him "down in

the hole." Not proceeding with reaccreditation as promised to the community and desired by the state, regardless of this supposed independent poll, is tantamount to theft. If your car breaks down and a neighbor comes over to help fix it, you don't hand them the keys to the car and tell them to keep it. The ownership and investment in Compton College has been made for decades by its people. Fix what was a short term problem and hand it back to the people that have been forking over the money for almost eighty years.

7. **MD/Hub:** Thank you very much for the clarification and the additional information; Although I did not say *El Camino* (I said partnership) was the major reason for improvements, I get your point. I have a few questions:
 - Why is there not more press about all those involved with the process of "improving the situation"? I think specifically of what has been in the press from the "communities side" of the story. It seems that most of it, from what I've seen, has been focused on the difference with ECC and not the good works that have been done. I mean, I would expect to, at some point in time, read where a "leader" would say "things are going great at the college!". This would go very far in changing the perception that nothing good can/has come from Compton. We never hear enough praises from ourselves about ourselves. How can I understand the value of the works great people like Dr. Cox are doing if I don't?
 - 2) I am 34 years old.....when/where/what is this greatness of Compton that everyone refers to? By the time I was in high school, Compton College was a sort of joke amongst my peers and classmates. I don't mean to be anything other than seriously wanting to know, in concrete terms, what the greatness was comprised of. This will greatly help to understand the points you make about pride of ownership and the benefits thereof.
 - 3)How were the conditions that ultimately led to the accreditation being lost allowed to reach the point they did? Were there no watchdogs or not enough community participation in the proceedings, meetings, etc etc? I ask because it would be interesting to know what has changed regarding. If it's because of lack of community participation, do more people attend meetings now? I know that there has been some who are meeting and organizing in support of accreditation as promised.....but what happens when the stimulus of ECC as a threat to local control is no longer? Will the community still remain involved and vice versa?
8. **Allison Jean Eaton:** The Bulletin ran a story within the past year based on an interview with Dr. Cox, and its angle was that the school was well on its way to attaining what it needs to in order to apply for accreditation eligibility--even, in some areas, ahead of schedule. And we have written stories on almost all of the FCMAT reports issued highlighting the accomplishments and strides the school has been making as measured during each subsequent FCMAT visit. We covered the grand opening of the cafeteria a year and a half ago or so back, which was a BIG deal, and the completion of the facilities master plan. However, most recently, we have focused more so on coverage of the process of gaining accreditation as compared to other topics, mainly because there is much misinformation circulating within the community regarding the process, what must be done, and the intentions of local leaders and *El Camino*. It's such a confusing, monotonous undertaking...

The community, overall, does not seem to be that involved, to me. I mean, you have the Concerned Citizens, who have been championing the cause from just about day one, but otherwise, I often get the feeling that people are more or less wishy washy on the topic. Or, at least, they are willing to spout off about it and complain or point fingers at El Camino, but when it comes down to it, are they actually actively involved and attending meetings, rallying other community members or doing anything else to participate in regaining local control? It would be nice to see City Hall take a more vocal role in rallying the citizens to get active in the fight for accreditation.

Maybe we should organize accreditation rallies? Kind of like a pep rally for a sports match, but instead for the accreditation process. It might sound simple and silly, but it could serve as a spark to generate excitement throughout the city's general population. If we all keep our eyes on the prize, so to speak, collectively the process can be pushed forward with an invigorated unity. And it could be a whole lot of fun!

9. **MD/Hub:** Why is there a "fight" to begin with?

Here's my most recent thoughts on the whole issue: Reading the article "Compton College On The Mend" in the [Daily Breeze](#) leaves me trying hard to understand the recent rumors and negative press about the college. You know the ones in which it was highlighted about the CCCD's removal from the commencement ceremonies? The same one's that pointed to a changing of the logo to more accurately reflect ECC? Now, of course I can read between the lines of it all and see how racism and historically reported prejudices play a big factor.....but just beyond that, what is the reason and what is *the real* about the college?

While Fallo says 'the motivation to save the college was largely altruistic and calls it a resounding success', the Breeze article gives the time line of events leading up to ECC's assistance. In a nutshell, about \$5 million was stolen by various people from 2003 to 2005 and the college had become the only in California's history to have it's accreditation revoked. Of course the article also mention that Compton is "a city infamous for political corruption, violent crime and gangsta rap."

Fast forward to 2010: Enrollment is over 6,000 and Landsberger says the recovery is "maybe a little ahead of the curve". The CCCD has been touting similar success if I am not mistaken. Yet, rumors that the college will never be under local control again persist. Community leaders, board members and city representatives have all spoken up. LeBlanc even said in a [Wave article](#) that the community fears were "spot on". Fears that the vote of the community for a CCCD that is losing it's power, influence and respect in the process of regaining accreditation and local control of the college.

Like I said, I can read between the lines but.....if I look beyond the usual I see another side to the story. Namely, what would have happened if ECC didn't step up and "save" the college? Of course it benefits ECC in a myriad of ways as it very well should. Shouldn't it? \$4 million, among other monies, to maintain an institution of higher education in Compton seems like a fair price to pay for the corruption that ruined the college. All this focus and press on what's wrong - mostly from opinion - and very little about what's right. Folks can still get a degree @ a college in the city of Compton. Imagine if they couldn't....where would they go? Why does just about

everything in Compton have to be politicized? So many politicians who find time for quotes in articles that usually make things more confusing or seem worse. Everybody wanna be the voice of the people when there is a perceived threat to the people's power. Guess what happens when that perceived threat is non-existent? The people usually get robbed blind. Are the people (everyday citizens, various organizations, etc) really prepared to remain engaged so as to ensure there is no repeat of corruption once local control is regained?

In all this mess, guess who you rarely hear from? The students. When you do hear from them, you hear things like this, as seen in a [recent article](#) about the college:

“Me being a student here, I feel the students, the teachers and everybody are still [representing] Compton no matter what people say,”

By arguing, “we limit ourselves” and “we are cutting away at the progression of the community. ... Ever since I’ve been here, it’s only been El Camino and I love this school to death. It may be an issue [to some], but the people are still the same and the outcome of the greatness of the community is still the same. If we all graduate, whether it’s Compton or El Camino, we [are] still fixing the community.”

<http://hubcitylivin.com/forum/topics/article-highlights-eccs>

10. **Alison Jean Eaton:** Who did they poll? I mean, what are the specs of the population sample questioned? Was it people who live within the college district, or just folks in the area? Or maybe students (a lot of students who attend Compton Center aren't Comptonites and so aren't necessarily loyal to the history or significance of the school).

That just does NOT sound like anything anyone from Compton would say. Well, at least most folks.

I'd be curious to know the name of the research firm, their credentials and experience, who hired them, etc.

I say fight tooth and nail for it; it's invaluable on so many levels. Nothing's worth losing the college--not a damn thing.

11. **Joe Lewis:** Well now; it's refreshing to read such supportive remarks about keeping Compton College whole. For those who seem to be uninformed, I recommend that you attend a board meeting to see what is really going on. We do not have marathon board meetings anymore. We start at 6:00 pm and are out by 7:30 pm or 8:00 at the latest. We have a few vanguards that unflinchingly express their concerns, and as the Classified Union President it is incumbent upon me to address the concerns of the Classified Federation of Employees, the work horse or engine of the college. Yes, faculty and administration gets the credit, but I am here to tell you that it has been Classified holding this institution together during the musical chairs of administrators. When there were no students, it was Classified showing up for work keeping the operation flowing until we got back on our feet. It is Classified that supports faculty and administrators in getting their work done. And it is Classified keeping the community engaged and leading the fight to make sure we do not lose Compton Community College District. For some reason, some people have been convinced that we must be accredited as El Camino College Compton

Community Educational Center first. Then, El Camino College is suppose to agree to transfer the accredited status over to Compton Community College, thereby giving up their annual management fee of approximately 4.5 plus million dollars a year. If you believe that, then I have a bridge I want to sell to you. The research firm was hired by the State Special Trustee, Dr. Peter Landsberger, and the research firm is Belden, Russonello & Stewart. Who and how they actualy chose the participants in thier survey is unknown. However, the reason why I posed the question as I did was to see if there were any correlations to what was produced in their survey findings. And, also to see how true Comptonites feel concerning this subject. Assemblyman Isador Hall, and Mervyn Dymally (the author of AB 318) plans to address the El Camino Board of Trustees October 18th at 4:00 pm at El Camino Torrance regarding the accreditation issue. I urge all who are in support of keeping Compton College whole to attend this very important meeting, because I truly believe they (El Camino Board) think we do not care or are not concerned with this issue. The Concerned Citizens of Compton, Inc. will be there, as well as myself and a host of others. We want to be accredited as Compton Community College District, not El Camino College. That was not the intent of AB318. That was a backroom MOU business deal concocked by the State Trustee, Barbara Beno, Executive Director of the Accreditation Commission (ACCJC) Accreditation Commission of Colleges and Junior Colleges, and El Camino. We have a great college that has produced great atheletes, lawyers, politicians, teachers, scholars, and just plain people who achieved their education and training went straight to work or transferred to a university for further educational pursuits. This is your traditional institution of which we should hold on to by any means necessary. This is not the time to be afraid. And, ladies and gentlemen; try not to be so apt to allow our city to be brokered off bit by bit. This city needs its own to stand on its own.

The Compton Bulletin

October 13, 2010

El Camino releases plan for Compton Center accreditation

NEW DOCUMENT DETAILS PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The El Camino Community College District has released the long-awaited, detailed plan required for accreditation of Compton Center by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

The document addresses all steps in the process of accreditation but does not mention the transfer of the college back to the Compton Community College District, prompting criticism among members of the Concerned Citizens and other groups in Compton.

Dr. Lawrence Cox, CEO of the Compton Community College District said residents should rest assured that the goal of local control will eventually be attained.

“This is the first time this has ever been done. There are no established procedures for one district formally turning over a college to another district,” Cox said. “But there should be no misunderstanding of the intention of El Camino to do that.”

“Right now we are focusing on getting through the accreditation process. The end result will be the accreditation of the El Camino Compton Center as a college in its own right.”

In releasing the document, El Camino spokeswoman Ann Marie Garten said that the ACCJC is ultimately the agency in charge.

“It’s important to remember that during the entire process, the direction, guidelines and timelines, from eligibility and candidacy through full accreditation, are determined by the ACCJC, not El Camino College, the ECC Compton Center, the Compton Community College District or any other entity,” Garten said.

The first step in the process is to determine eligibility of the center to receive accreditation. The center must illustrate that it meets the 21 criteria set by the ACCJC. It is up to El Camino to establish goals and benchmarks for review. Once El Camino has concluded the center has met those criteria, it will apply to the ACCJC for eligibility.

It is not possible to designate a firm timeline or the eligibility phase of the accreditation process, because timelines are determined by the activities and schedules of the ACCJC.

Once it approves the application for eligibility, the commission will determine a course of action and timeline that must be followed in preparation for the center’s candidacy.

If accreditation eligibility is denied, the commission will notify El Camino about deficiencies that must be corrected for the process to go forward.

The center is currently working toward meeting all 21 requirements for eligibility, which includes providing evidence of sustainability in the areas of planning and program review and evidence of proficiency in student learning outcomes and assessment.

Once it is established that the center is eligible to apply for accreditation, El Camino will apply for candidacy status of the center. The ACCJC will establish a timeline for the preparation of the candidacy review.

A self study report will document how the center meets the accreditation standards, a process that usually takes approximately 18 months.

Next, a team selected by the ACCJC will visit the center to validate the information in the self study report. The team will prepare an evaluation report to be submitted to the commission. During the candidacy stage, the center must follow all Accrediting Commission guidelines, including prescribed annual reports and midterm progress reports. Based on the recommendation of the site-visit team, the commission will send a report to El Camino with commendations and recommendations for improvement to bring it into compliance with the standards for accreditation.

The Accrediting Commission may grant, defer or deny candidacy. If candidacy is granted, the center must remain in compliance with the standards throughout the entire candidacy period, which is a minimum of two years. If it denies candidacy, the center will need to complete another self study report after two years and take up the process again.

During the candidacy stage, the center will remain an educational center operated by El Camino. If the center is successful during the candidacy period, a second self study report and another site visit will be required. The commission will review the site visit team report and complete another overall assessment in preparation for granting initial accreditation as a college.

The entire process is beginning immediately during the 2010 fall semester. It will be finished, if all phases are successful, by either fall 2012 or spring 2013.

The Compton Community College District CEO and El Camino's vice president of the Compton Center will lead the process. They will be responsible for monitoring the process and making operational decisions. The CEO and VPCC will be accountable to the superintendent/ president and the special trustee, as well as the El Camino and Compton boards of trustees. El Camino's vice president of academic affairs will serve as the center's accreditation liaison officer.

A Steering Committee will comprise the president of the faculty council and two faculty members, two classified employees, a student nominated by the ASB, a Compton Center manager and El Camino College's vice presidents of Academic Affairs, Student and Community Advancement and Administrative Services.

When the center is granted accreditation, it will be returned to the Compton Community College District, which will then have the liberty to restore its original name.

"It's early to be thinking about that," said Cox. "Although I know the community is very eager to get the college back. It will happen, hopefully at a public ceremony held by both districts."

Garten emphasized that the transfer of control will eventually happen.

"The community can rest assured that the transfer will take place," she said. "It is guaranteed in the language in AB 318 as well as in the agreement between the Compton and El Camino districts."

The El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees will discuss the feasibility of the center's returning to independent-community- college status during its regular meeting on Monday, Oct. 18, at 4 p.m. at the ECCCD office. Assemblyman Isadore Hall III, D-Compton, plans to attend and address several issues before the board at the meeting.

The topics Hall will discuss include accreditation; returning high-end classes such as radiology, engineering, pharmacy technician and pre-med to the Compton campus; Cox's contract extension; and financial accountability.

The assemblyman urges the entire community to attend in a show of solidarity and commitment to regaining local control. Anyone who would like to attend or who wants further information should contact Minister Tatum at 323- 635-8933.

"EL CAMINO QUARRELS OVER GRANT"

Daily Breeze, Sunday October 10, 2010

Rob Kuznia

COMMENTS

1. Looks like ElCo teachers just wanted to come to Europe paid by tax payers. And now that they can't get that free vacation they are a little disgruntled. Typical free loading liberals.
2. elco just needs to go back to focusing on winning football games
3. It seems a shame that the President of the College is not forward-thinking, beyond this current economic crisis, in wanting El Camino to have programs that set it apart from others. This program seems to me a no-brainer.
4. A more provocative question is Why should the board of trustees be collecting full medical benefits from the school as a gift for serving?
Certainly there are well qualified, civic-minded individuals who would gladly step up and serve on the board without this costly perk.
Fallo either directly or through his minions continues to cut out class offerings, support programs, and soon to be announced| the winter session.
These are austere times. Perhaps the board should self regulate the expense of it's€™s own existence.
5. Going to Italy to learn from their "child education/development" system isn't going to improve the education system here. "Study abroad" packages are luxuries; they're not entitlements. It's not the time nor the place for such luxuries in a bad economy as now. It's a "no-brainer" to you because you're myopic and can't grasp the fragile economic state we're in<--typical democrat mentality: spend what's not there.
6. Good Grief! Kudos to the University President for nixing this lark! I don't believe teachers and students from a two-year child development program should be travelling abroad to Europe on grant money. The arrogance and expectation of this group of educators and students is typical. The net gain to the El Camino campus is nil--- this lark amounts to nothing more than a paid vacation to Europe for a small group of elites.
Yeah, I have a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and would have loved to traveled to Austria to study Freud! Or Australia to study penal history as a Criminal Justice undergrad!
Any travel of this type should be linked to a project which benefits not only the narrow interests of an academic department, but also the larger college community as well.
Wake up people ! Your narrow pursuits don't merit special gifts or considerations at your level!
7. Ray Gen needs to re-think his role. It is the Boards job to make sure that money matters are handled correctly. In this case a federal grant (money) was rejected by an employee without

any explanation to the Board member who made a legitimate inquiry. This does rise to review by the entire Board. Why was the employee insubordinate and why was free money turned down? Money that helps even one student is money worth accepting. What other monies have been squandered that have not made the newspaper? Perhaps it is time to investigate just how much power one man can have.

8. Apparently professional educator Janet Young would have been absent from her class during the middle of the school year.

Young said the grant would have caused her to miss five days of school.

Administrators add that it isn't productive to send faculty abroad in the middle of the school year, when doing so benefits only a handful of students.

I take it then that professional college board member Maureen O'Donnell, A former Torrance school board member and city councilwoman known for asking tough questions, certainly qualified, would take Janet Young's place in the class room so that I would not have to pay someone else to fill in for Young during her absence.

The Atlantis grant clusters colleges in groups of four. El Camino was to partner with California State University, Dominguez Hills; University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy; and the University of Valencia in Spain. Each college selects four students to participate. The Italian school would have been especially enlightening.

Even though Young and the selected students speak Italian, would not a Mexican college fit better with this group as the students selected to participate will most likely instruct their students in Spanish not Italian?

9. Let's take another look at what YOU said. YOU said, "spend what's not there". The article CLEARLY stated that the money for the handful of students and teachers was a "FEDERAL GRANT". To most of us that means that the money was a gift and NOT to be paid back.

This is directly related to this Nation's continued effort to help educate our students re: life abroad in conjunction with the "Student Exchange Program" that has been very educational for all students both foreign and domestic for many years.

The economic status of this country and world as well DOES NOT and HAS NOT eliminated the ability of this country or others to continue with viable and important programs that will benefit our leaders of tomorrow.

You do not understand and neither does El Camino's President "Tom Fallo", that there IS STILL money out there for important programs. By ignoring this fact, one shows their lack of knowledge of what really is available out there for financial assistance. This also at the same time shames "Tom Fallo" the leader of El Camino College for standing in the way of further education of our college students IE: "Leaders of Tomorrow".

"Tom Fallo" needs to clarify very clearly WHY he refuses to accept this "FEDERAL GRANT MONEY" and why he stands in the way of a program that has had very good results for all who participates in the Foreign Exchange Program.

It has been revealed on many occasions that "Tom Fallo" refuses to give the employees of El Camino College a pay raise for many years. "Tom Fallo" is all about making himself look good to others at the expense of the El Camino Employees. This shows VERY POOR leadership as we

all know that the cost of living rises continually and stops for no one. does "Tom Fallo" care about the employees??? Apparently NOT. Should "Tom Fallo" be replaced by a more considerate leader?? Absolutely "YES". Get rid of the bum and watch El Camino College become a happier working place for all. There is just NO EXCUSE for POOR LEADERSHIP!!!

10. Let's take another look at what YOU said. YOU said, "spend what's not there". The article CLEARLY stated that the money for the handful of students and teachers was a "FEDERAL GRANT". To most of us that means that the money was a gift and NOT to be paid back.

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11. "directly related to this Nation's continued effort" - not "directly related to this Nations continued effort"

"good results for all who participate" - not "good results for all who participates"

"Does Tom Fallo care" - not "does Tom fallo care"

Ignorant uneducated imbecile....

12. You are obviously a lowlife individual who has nothing better to do with your time other than to harass people of your choice. I see that you have a following of dorks who also are lowlives just like you. And FYI: Tom Fallo is a name of a person and the first letter of each name is to be capitalized. You are in such a hurry to harass me that you forgot to capitalize Fallo. Aren't you the bight one!!! Have a very nice (finger to you) day.

13. "Aren't you the bright one!!!" - not "Aren't you the bight one!!!"

Ignorant uneducated imbecile...

14. Thank you lowlife!
15. yeah...it's free money....lets spend it!!!! how about someone, perhaps in DC, saying "you know....all of these unnecessary trips are being postponed until we have the money". Just like any family would when times are tight. You'd spend that money on something a bit more important, or.....the horror....SAVE IT!!
Taxpayers paid that \$180K. It's a slap in the face to spend that money on a trip of this nature.
16. Since I live nearby and like to think of ECC as my community college I am sadden to read about this grant being turned down. Childhood ed students rarely if ever get a chance to go to another country to observe and exchange ideas about child care programs. If ECC was the only two year college that was chosen they should of been flattered and honored to be picked - to have the president turn it down is an insult to the college and the U.S. - Be wary president Fallo - I for one will keep a closer eye on the college and what you are doing with it. Also, I find it funny that the CD recording ran out when it did. Something stinks - Kudos to O'Donnell - maybe others on the board should start taking a stand as well.
17. There is NO "free money" in this world. This little boondoggle is an example of the staff thinking that they are entitled to anything that they can get their hands on.
Did they not know about the ban on international travel? Who will pay for instruction during the five days the teacher is missing? What does a two year college have to do with a specialization in early childhood education, that's for at least the junior level. And finally, I bet there are other costs in this little adventure that would be paid for by El Camino, grants do not usually cover all expenses.
With a lot of people to educate and a dwindling money supply I applaud this effort to save some money.
PS - how many ECC students speak Italian? Not many I would say. This one seems to - how were they picked from the student body, just a coincidence?
18. Well, Norm and Sidney get it. The President of the College gets it. Taxpayers want THEIR money spent carefully.
19. In the article, "Young said the grant would have caused her to miss five days of school. It also would have paid her a stipend of \$2,000." (sic) as well as travel expenses. I wonder what she meant by "five days of school"? On the college's on-line schedule, it appears that Young only teaches scheduled classes on M, T and Th nights (plus some on-line classes). So, for Young, is five days of school "only" a week?--or is it almost two weeks? And when did a semester get reduced from 18 weeks to 16 weeks?
20. The article implies that board member O'Donnell and the faculty union have a close relationship. It would be wise for all elected officials, especially in today's fiscal environment, to be close to their taxpayers. As someone stated earlier, we need to question the person at the Department of Education about this entire project. If our college was to receive \$180,000 but other colleges are also involved, don't you want to know the total amount of this "grant"--e.g. our tax dollars. If taxpayers knew the things that our hard earned dollars fund--at both the

Federal and State level--we would likely stop paying our taxes. This grant needs to be nominated for a "flying fickled finger" award.

21. Say You Don't states: "It has been revealed on many occasions that "Tom Fallo" refuses to give the employees of El Camino College a pay raise for many years." ... "we all know that the cost of living rises continually and stops for no one." ... "does "Tom Fallo" care about the employees???"

Say You Don't (SYD) is obviously a public employee of the college who thinks he/she is entitled to a raise!!! Listen up SYD: in the real world folks are losing their jobs, losing their benefits, losing their homes, losing their families, losing their retirements. So, count your blessings you have a good job and don't expect sympathy from others when you whine that you haven't had a raise in a few years. Cost of living increase?--that is the least of most folks' problems. You, too, should be entered into nomination for a "flying fickled finger of fate" award.

22. @say you don't
I'll tell Tommy Fallo you want a pay raise...keep on teaching underwater basket weaving at Elco so that you can perpetuate the deep intellectual atmosphere that you disseminate at that quasi-highschool.

Federal grant money = more money the Federal Reserve prints...take this both literally and figuratively. Oh yeah, you need to take both macro and microeconomics there, "Bernanke."
btw, Michael Moore isn't making his slanderous movies anymore. You know why? <---Obama don't got short on "change"...get it? ROFL

23. Can't believe anyone thinks spending \$180,000 on this is a good idea. If you insist on spending the money because "it's there"....how about giving 20 families \$9000 each? That would make a REAL difference in peoples lives. Not some stupid vacation. And geez...a \$2000 stipend on TOP of expenses?? So we pay for their souvenirs too?? What a crock.

This is why people are totally fed up with big government spending. I mean, this is only \$180,000 and doesn't even hit the radar. There must be thousands of wasteful programs like this in the country that add up to billions and billions. America isn't short on cash. We just spend like drunken sailors. We are the boxer who earned \$100,000,000 over our careers and now sleeping on a friend's sofa.

24. Administrators say they didn't realize the grant involved international travel when they signed off on it. They add that it isn't productive to send faculty abroad in the middle of the school year, when doing so benefits only a handful of students.

EXACTLY! It is utterly wrong (first) that the government is handing this money out and (second) that such frivolous expenditures are allowed. THANK GOD the administration realized how WRONG this is and how WRONG it appears to the taxpaying public.
PAY FOR YOUR OWN ITALIAN VACATIONS!

25. Taxpayer, Stacy, Norm, Sydney Jared of Torrance, & you obviously have a weak understanding of the designated use for the 188,000 dollars. This is a part of a large sum of money that is put aside each and every year to be used ONLY for "Student Exchange" programs throughout the

U.S. If El Camino College fails to use this money for it's intended use, then that very same money will be given to another college.

There are numerous programs within the U.S. that provide money for special uses and using that designated money for other uses is prohibited! What don't you people understand about that???

Obviously you would rather see that money go to another school and to just leave out in the cold all of the El Camino Students. What great supporters of higher education you people are! As far as raises for the employees are concerned, Tom Fallo has had ample opportunities to give out at least small raises to his employees BEFORE the economy went into the drink, but he still choose to reject doing that and for no go reason except that he thought that he would look good to the Trustees. This man is self-centered and needs to be replaced "NOW"!!! What is really funny here is that all of you are spouting concerns for the use of the \$188,000 yet you have no idea of the numerous grants that are still available here in the U.S. even with the economy in the shape that it is in today.

26. "Say You Don't" --- oh...I understand perfectly the designated use of this money. Yeah..yeah...i know...it's special use money...blah blah blah.

We do NOT have to spend this money. How about someone who isn't tone deaf to the economic situation this country is in stepping in and saying, "you know, we really shouldn't be spending this money".

You use the word "grant" as if it somehow isn't money. As if the taxpayers of this country are not footing the bill on this. It's a nice program. One day, maybe we will be able to afford it. But right now, we should only be spending on the necessities, or not spending at all. Got it?

27. You are right, I'm not aware of the numerous grants available. This is just another example of the out-of-control spending spree we've been on for years and years. I'm sure there are grants for things 10x more ridiculous than this free vacation to Europe. I'll say it again, America is not short on cash. We just waste it. Which is why I will always vote for the guy or gal who I trust will not try to raise my taxes. I don't want to be paying for stupid little trips to Europe for some 13th graders.
28. RESPONSE TO "SAY YOU DON'T". The most important lesson I learned from my grandparents was: It isn't what you make--it is what you spend. Apparently you (and others) do not subscribe to such philosophy. My grandparents were pretty smart--they made it through the depression and had many first hand experiences. That said, there are many of us that believe you are right when you say there are numerous grants and other government spending that would blow away the average taxpayer. But what we are saying to you (and others)-- STOP it when you see it -- don't be a party to waste or things that just don't sound right for these times.
29. U.S. Dept. of Education (800) 872-5327

30. It is so sad that you see no value in the Student Exchange Program. This IS NOT a waste of money as you see it. And yes there are some programs that are wasteful but this is NOT one of them. What in the world do you have against educating our young???
31. Thank you for you're input! I would never presume that your grandparents are wrong. Grandparents were down the road before us and learned many lessons to OUR benefit!

I must say however that educating our young NEVER sounds wrong at anytime. Don't you agree?

Former dean's harassment suit against El Camino College begins

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/13/2010 08:01:56 PM PDT

Updated: 10/13/2010 08:12:11 PM PDT

Lawyers cast opening arguments Wednesday in a discrimination and sexual harassment suit against El Camino College by a former dean who claims she was wrongfully forced to resign by a "good old boy" network of administrators.

- Kristi Blackburn, currently a dean at Los Angeles Harbor College, alleges that an El Camino vice president made sexually suggestive comments to her and retaliated against her for standing up for her secretary who had asked for overtime pay. The secretary later filed and won her own internal hostile work environment complaint against the college, with Blackburn testifying on her behalf.

Wednesday's hearing before a 12-member jury in Torrance Superior Court kicked off a trio of intertwined cases against El Camino that are scheduled to be tried in succession. One of those cases will be that of the secretary, Nyesha Artiaga, who - in yet another, unrelated complaint - claims her boss groped her on multiple occasions, and threatened to fire her if she refused to have sex with him.

As for the

Blackburn case, her allegations are wide-ranging and sometimes salacious. They include not only claims of sexual harassment and the creation of a hostile work environment, but also of the theft of her PalmPilot from her locked office and an alleged illegal secret meeting about the terms of her employment between the vice president and El Camino's elected school board.

They also include claims of breach of contract when she served as El Camino's dean of fine arts due to her increased workload that came with the college's takeover of Compton College that began in 2006.

On Wednesday, Blackburn testified after both attorneys gave opening statements. But court adjourned for the day before El Camino's attorney had a chance to cross-examine her.

Steven Haney, Blackburn's attorney, said his client's case is centered on what he calls a "good old boy's club" that has persisted at the Torrance-area community college for a long time.

"It arises out of the conduct of upper-level male management of the school and how they discriminate and in some case even harass their women employees - all the way from low-level administrative assistants all the way up to actual deans," he said.

But Larry Frierson, El Camino College's attorney, said Blackburn's case is about one thing and one thing only: money.

"She wants El Camino College to pay her money, and a significant amount," he said.

Frierson painted Blackburn as a manipulative employee who is overly quick to feel violated, citing a complaint she'd filed against Dona Ana Community College - her employer prior to taking the El Camino job. Frierson said Blackburn's New Mexico complaint alleged that her supervisor was trying to set her up romantically with someone. (Blackburn is currently married.)

Blackburn's yearlong stint with the college began in February 2006. The primary target of her complaint is Francisco Arce, El Camino's vice president of academic affairs. Although the bulk of her allegations focus on what she claimed were his attempts to retaliate against her by creating a hostile work environment, the complaint also accuses him of making sexually suggestive comments to Blackburn about the third woman who has filed a separate claim against the college: Carmen Hunt, a professor of communications.

According to Blackburn's affidavit, Arce told Blackburn that Hunt is "beautiful, intelligent and litigious" and that he "had to focus above Hunt's neck and `constantly remind' himself not to `look below her neck.'"

The document goes on to say he "suggestively disclosed to Blackburn that he had a special `lady friend' - not Hunt - with whom he went out even though he was married."

"These kinds of comments contributed to an already intimidating and oppressive environment," the affidavit says.

Interestingly, though, it was Frierson, not Haney, who brought these allegations up with the jury.

"It's important to understand that none of the allegations of sexual harassment involves any inappropriate touching of Kristi Blackburn, any sexual innuendo or sexual comments directed toward her, and really any sexual conduct with respect to anything at all," he told the jury. "That gives you some idea of the kinds of behavior and the threshold that Kristi Blackburn has for determining when people have in some way wronged her."

Relations between Blackburn and Arce reportedly began to sour after her secretary - Artiaga - requested overtime pay in 2006 for the added duties that came with the Compton College acquisition. Blackburn alleges that Arce instructed her to fire Artiaga. Blackburn says that when she refused on the grounds that there was no cause, he ordered her to write a negative performance evaluation about Artiaga.

Fearing for her job, Blackburn complied, Haney said. But, he added, her negative evaluation wasn't negative enough for Arce, who marked it up with a pen to make it more negative.

When Artiaga found the draft, she filed a hostile work environment claim to the human resources department.

"The old boys club, if you will - Arce and his cronies - tried to pin the whole thing on Kristi Blackburn," he said. At the hearing, Haney continued, Blackburn surprised them by showing the human resources investigators her original evaluation with Arce's markings.

"It's a smoking gun," he said. "It's evidence showing that Dr. Arce instructed Kristi Blackburn to change her evaluation. ... to make it basically a hatchet evaluation."

In the end, the panel sided with Artiaga, and put Blackburn's initial evaluation - not the alleged "hatchet evaluation" - in her personnel files.

"What happened next was a campaign of retaliation and harassment against my client," he said.

Blackburn says she was not given the raise - from \$110,000 to \$114,000 - she was promised in her contract after six months on the job. She also claims that Arce - upset about the Artiaga case - decided to give Blackburn a performance evaluation six months earlier than is stipulated in her contract.

She claims he began to criticize her for speaking up at meetings. She also accuses him of trying to sabotage her ability to win a grant from the state. Finally, she said Arce held an illegal secret meeting with El Camino's board of trustees in which he recommended that her contract not be renewed. Blackburn said she was not notified of this meeting, and so had no opportunity to show them her 400-page rebuttal of Arce's claims.

Frierson - Arce's attorney - countered that Artiaga was not the model employee that Haney painted her out to be. He said Artiaga had lied on her application about having been fired or told to resign while working as a dispatcher for the Los Angeles Police Department. He also said Artiaga was habitually late, and had received a letter of reprimand from Blackburn before the controversy ignited.

"All of these facts were brought to the administration," he said. "It was their perception that there's a brand-new dean who really has not had that much experience ... in the management operation of a college. They offered to help her. She cooperated with that help."

Blackburn's attorney on Wednesday did not address the theft of the PalmPilot, other than to bring it up in his opening statement.

The case resumes today before Judge Michael Vicencia, and is expected to take 10 working days.

442nd Veteran Among Compton Degree Recipients

Thu, Oct 14 2010



Lawson Sakai, right, with his unit in France. Today he is president of the Friends & Family of Nisei Veterans in Morgan Hill.

On Oct. 16, WWII veteran and purple heart recipient Lawson Sakai (87) will receive one honor that has eluded him for more than 70 years—a college diploma. Sakai is one of more than 30 former Compton Junior College students who will receive an honorary degree from the Compton Community College District as part of the California Nisei Diploma Project.

In April 1942, as 120,000 Japanese Americans, residing mostly in California, were ordered by the U.S. Government into internment camps under Executive Order 9066, Sakai and his family were allowed passage to Colorado.

A day or so before the relocation effort, then-Governor of Colorado Ralph L. Carr intervened, announcing that Japanese Americans were welcome in Colorado if they had the ability and resources to make the trip. Carr is recognized for helping Japanese Americans during WWI and often spoke out in defense of their civil rights, arguing that it was inhumane and unconstitutional to place them in internment camps.

The Sakai family, who at the time lived in Montebello, belonged to the 7th Day Adventist Church which rallied behind the family and helped with their relocation to Delta, Colo. “Our church contacted a church in Colorado which agreed to sponsor our family, so with a day’s notice we packed up only what would fit in one car along with four people,” explained Sakai.

On their way out of California, the Sakai family decided to stop at the Manzanar internment camp to visit some friends who had been assigned to the camp. “I think we are the only family who voluntarily went to Manzanar and were allowed to leave,” says Sakai. Unfortunately, the Sakai family never did get to see their friends because once inside, a camp worker strongly suggested they leave while they still could. “We thought they might keep us, so we left with our FBI letter outlining our passage to Colorado.”

Once settled in Delta, Colo., the Sakai family worked as farm laborers and Sakai enrolled in Mesa College in Grand Junction in September 1942. Once again his studies were interrupted, but this time because of his strong desire to serve his country. Sakai wanted to enlist in the U.S. military, but was not permitted due to his 4-C Enemy Alien classification. In March 1943, he volunteered for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) where he served in Mississippi and eventually France, until December 1945. While serving in the 442nd, Sakai was wounded four times and awarded both a Purple Heart and two Bronze Star Medals.

The 442nd RCT became the most decorated unit in U.S. military history for its size and length of service. There were more than 9,000 Purple Hearts, seven Presidential Distinguished Unit Citations, and more than 18,000 individual decorations for bravery including 20 Congressional Medals of Honor, 19 of which were upgraded from Distinguished Service Crosses in June 2000.

After the war, Sakai married his wife Mineko in 1946 and they settled in California where he once again enrolled in college at Pepperdine University. However his studies were interrupted for a third time when his father-in-law asked for his help in restarting a farming, packing and shipping business in Gilroy, Calif. The business folded after a few years and Sakai worked for several other companies after that until he opened his own travel agency in 1970. He enjoyed a successful travel business for 20 years and sold the agency in 1990.

A WWII buff and advocate of WWII veterans’ affairs, today Sakai is the president of the Friends & Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV) organization in Morgan Hill, Calif., where he has lived since 1948. The FFNV (www.ffnv.org) is a nonprofit organization formed to preserve the proud accomplishments of the 442nd RCT and to honor all veterans of the RCT.

Sakai and his wife have four adult children and seven grandchildren, five of whom have already graduated from college. “I’m so proud of my family and their accomplishments,” said Sakai. “It’s nice to know I will go back to my educational roots and receive a diploma after all of these years.”

Move on from grant discord

Daily Breeze

Letter to the Editor, Thursday, October 14, 2010

Most of us in the South Bay are very proud of El Camino College. It would be difficult to find someone in the area who doesn't have some connection to the college. It is a great school that helps lots of people. That's why there are waiting lists and long lines to get classes, as reported in the Daily Breeze last month.

The Sunday paper reported on discord between staff and administration about a grant relating to foreign travel. Hmm, what's going on here? Must be negotiation time again where the teachers union tries to divide the board from the administration.

We've seen this many times before, at many schools and colleges. At least they only got one board member to bite this time. Let's move ahead and look at the bigger picture as we salute El Camino College!

- Lynn Brennan

To Monitor Office Behavior, Colleges Add Windows to Professors' Doors

October 10, 2010

And faculty members, to regain their privacy, hang curtains or tape up paperwork

By Peter Schmidt

A few questions for college faculty members who are reading this article in their offices, alone, with their doors closed:

Can anyone else in your building see you now?

Are you visible enough to be hesitant to do anything there you would not do in public? If someone were to accuse you of some outrageous act—say, dancing around your desk wearing nothing but a feather boa—would anyone else in the building be able to peer into the room to ascertain the truth? What about a much more serious accusation of sexual harassment?

As you answer such questions, are you glancing over at a window located in or near your office door?

If you repeatedly answered yes to those questions, you are hardly alone. In fact, there is a decent chance that administrators arranged to have that window installed partly because they knew it would make you think about how visible you are.

That glass portal, it turns out, is a window into the thinking of college administrations. And what it reveals is a profound ambivalence about whether, in this day and age, faculty members should work in rooms where no one can see them.

"Society has moved us to have more observable interactions," says Janice M. Abraham, president of United Educators, a higher-education insurance and risk-management company. Considering that completely private settings provide opportunities for sexual harassment and other untoward behavior—as well as false allegations of such deeds—installing office windows to afford a view into the room "is certainly a reasonable practice," she says.

Seeing Danger

Of course, safety and security are hardly the only considerations, or even the main ones, prompting colleges to install windows in or near professors' doors. Being able to look through them lets people enter or leave the room without worrying that the swinging door might clock someone on the other side. It also lets students determine, without potentially disruptive knocking, if faculty members are in their offices and free to talk.

Architects, who encourage the installation of such windows as a means of allowing "borrowed" light to pass in and out of offices, argue that the windows provide academic buildings with a feeling of openness that fosters collaboration and a sense of community. Such "open" work environments have become all the rage in corporate America in recent years, and many colleges have embraced the idea that offices should be structured in ways that promote interaction and teamwork.

That said, the goal of allowing borrowed light to flow in and out of faculty offices can be accomplished by placing interior windows *above* doorways, too high up to be peered through, or installing frosted- or etched-glass windows that allow light to pass through without affording a view.

If the window is clear and at eye level, however, there is a good chance that considerations of safety, security, and legal liability were raised by the administrators who worked with architects to determine the room's specifications.

Although no national organization involved with educational-facility design or campus risk management has formally urged colleges to install interior windows on faculty offices for such purposes, administrators at a growing number of colleges have been factoring them into building plans, often at considerable added expense, to discourage sexual harassment, violence, and false accusations of such behavior. Long thought of as necessary to help people keep an eye on students in meeting and study rooms on campus, office windows now also are commonly thought of as a means of ensuring faculty members are not hidden from sight in their interactions with others.

"If there is something horrible that happened on your campus, you start to think about it more," says Carole C. Wedge, president of Shepley Bulfinch, a Boston-based architecture firm.

Mark Rodgers, the University of Denver's in-house architect, says his institution began using transparent, rather than translucent, glass in such windows for security reasons about a decade ago, at the urging of an academic-program director who had seen a former

colleague at another college accused of inappropriate behavior during a private, unwitnessed meeting. Mr. Rodgers's office lets the deans or directors of academic programs decide what kinds of windows they want for those working under them, and many discuss the matter with their faculty and staff members. Typically they choose an arrangement that allows employees the option of privacy. "Most often, they decide on clear-glass sidelights with blinds," he says.

Steven H. Kaplan, president of the University of New Haven, says clear interior windows are now standard in most of his institution's new or newly renovated faculty offices, and administrators there are given the option of having them as well. "People feel more comfortable when there is openness on all sides," he says.

Blind Spots

There is a big crack in the argument for such windows, however: It rests on the assumption that faculty members will not permanently block them, with blinds or otherwise. That assumption, it turns out, has almost no basis in reality. The desire of administrators to deny faculty members complete privacy bumps up against the desire of faculty members to maintain it, even if that means sacrificing the borrowed light and other benefits such windows afford.

Mary P. Cox, Virginia Commonwealth University's in-house architect, says faculty members at its recently built business school were "very disturbed" by the installation of windows affording views into their offices. "They don't want to be sitting at their desk looking like a lab specimen for anybody walking in the corridor," she says.

Persius C. Rickes, president of Rickes Associates, a Boston-based firm that plans higher-education facilities, has made a hobby of mentally cataloging, during her tours of academic buildings, the lengths faculty members will go to to avoid being looked in on. She estimates that at least 90 percent deliberately obstruct the view in some way. They tape up course-related paperwork, hang curtains, install stained glass, create tchotchke displays—whatever it takes. Their desire for privacy, she says, entails "privacy in its entirety," not just spatial or acoustic, but visual as well.

"Personally, I don't care to have somebody walk down the hall and look in to see me. I feel exposed and a little vulnerable," says Patrick D. Nolan, a professor of sociology at the University of South Carolina, who has hung up poster board and a book cover to block an eye-level window in his door.

Elementary and secondary schools routinely prohibit their employees from blocking such windows, out of a desire to protect children. College officials, however, have shown an unwillingness to take such a step, perhaps because they fear the outcome would be faculty rebellion.

Professors' sense of vulnerability in being seen makes sense to Ann H. Franke, president of Wise Results, a Washington firm that advises colleges on risk management. She questions the assumption that windows in or near office doors offer any safety benefit, especially considering how college employees are widely advised to try to stay hidden in locked offices if ever faced with a Virginia Tech-like shooting situation.

Colleges, she says, can achieve many of the safety and security benefits associated with such windows by giving faculty members one simple piece of advice: When a student is in your office, prop open the door.

Honorary college diplomas awarded to interned Japanese Americans

LA Times

October 17, 2010

The Compton Community College District honors dozens of students — most now in their 80s — whose studies were interrupted by their forcible relocation to camps during World War II.



Lawson Sakai, 87, receives his honorary college diploma from Lawrence Cox, left, provost of El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center, and Charles Davis, president of the board of trustees. (Barbara Davidson, Los Angeles Times / October 15, 2010)

Lawson Sakai modestly recounts his life's accomplishments: He was awarded a Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars during World War II. He helped run a vegetable farm and worked in the food-processing business. Then he launched a successful travel agency.

But the one thing that eluded Sakai for almost 70 years was a college diploma.

"I have four children and seven grandchildren, and I am the only one without a degree," said Sakai, 87, a resident of Morgan Hill, southeast of San Jose. "I would like to join them."

Sakai finally got that wish Saturday when he was awarded an honorary associate in arts degree for his studies at the former Compton Junior College. His education was suspended there in 1942 after the U.S. government forcibly relocated about 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry to internment camps.

According to officials with the Compton Community College District, 78 second-generation Japanese Americans, commonly known as Nisei, were identified as qualifying for honorary degrees.

On Saturday, 46 of them were slated to claim their diplomas in person while the relatives of five others were expected to accept on behalf of their kin. The remaining awards were mailed to those who were unable to attend, community college district officials said.

The ceremony was part of the California Nisei College Diploma Project, which aims to award honorary college degrees to all Japanese Americans — living or deceased — whose postsecondary studies were derailed during World War II.

Assemblyman Warren T. Furutani (D-Gardena) sponsored a bill that helped launch the California Nisei Diploma Project last year. He said the legislation was "an attempt to finish unfinished business, tie together loose ends, and fulfill dreams that were deferred."

Most of Saturday's diploma recipients were in their 80s. Some had travelled from across the country to attend the event.

Margaret Yoshida flew in from New Jersey. She completed her junior high school studies, and her diploma was mailed to her at the Manzanar internment camp in California's Owens Valley. But she never got the chance to finish junior college.

"I really did look forward to graduating in a cap and gown," said Yoshida, 86.

Instead, after internment, she was part of a group of some 2,500 Japanese Americans who went to work at Seabrook Farm near Bridgeton, N.J.

"Now I'm going to be a great-grandma graduate," Yoshida said, laughing.

Sakai, the World War II veteran, was equally eager to attend Saturday's celebration.

Today, Sakai is president of the Friends of Family of Nisei Veterans, a group that honors the history and contributions of former soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a highly decorated unit composed of mostly Japanese Americans.

Altadena resident Robert Sugawara, 88, said he was pleased that Japanese Americans, once viewed as foes, were now being vindicated.

Many former students said they were proud they were able to excel in their professions despite the disruption to their early education and prejudice toward Japanese Americans.

Tomomi "Tom" Murakami, 88, was able to forge a distinguished career in electrical engineering, having obtained bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees in the discipline.

During his career at the former RCA Corp., he earned 11 patents for his work, and helped develop the radar design for the Aegis missile defense system, according to information provided by the Compton Junior College Nisei Diploma Project.

Murakami was not well enough to attend Saturday's ceremony. In an e-mail, he credited his years at Compton Junior College for helping lay the foundation for his success in later years.

"It's an honor to receive this degree from Compton Junior College, even at this late date," Murakami said.

Academic Credit: Colleges' Common Currency Has No Set Value

The Chronicle of Higher Education

October 17, 2010

Colleges resist regulators' calls for consistency

By Sara Lipka

There's more than one way to get a credit. A weeklong service project in the Dominican Republic: 1 credit. An electromagnetic-energy lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 1 credit. A summer internship in fashion: 1 credit. A training program in "meeting facilitation" at McDonald's Hamburger University: 1 credit.

Such designations, based more or less on time, depend on institutional discretion. No Fort Knox backs the currency of credit.

Yet credit underlies vital calculations of academic progress, faculty workload, federal and state appropriations, and student aid. The "student hour" of weekly instruction over a semester, conceived in the early 20th century to gauge colleges' industrial efficiency, still guides the assignment of credits to courses. But fewer undergraduates just sit through traditional lectures. As colleges value an expanding catalog of educational experiences, federal regulators wary of credit inflation and the overawarding of aid have proposed an official definition.

Higher-education leaders argue, however, that a strict standard of academic credit wouldn't guarantee quality of learning, and would threaten the variety and innovation that make colleges and universities in the United States so strong. The versatility of credit is not a liability, they say, but an asset.

Racking Up Credit

Average number of credits for students who graduate from four-year institutions:

Students who did not transfer



Lateral transfers (from other 4-year colleges)



2-year transfers (from community colleges)



Note: The discrepancies in average number of credits earned suggest that some—perhaps those from two-year colleges in particular—do not transfer successfully or do not count toward degrees.

Source: "National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988" (1988-2000), National Center for Education Statistics

"The accommodation of an increasingly diverse array of students couldn't have happened without us being flexible," says Judith S. Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Given the needs of specific student populations, faculties can develop new options—an online course, an accelerated program—and weigh their content and rigor in assigning credit. "This is, at its heart, an academic judgment," Ms. Eaton says.

A test of the currency is whether it remains consistent enough for colleges and universities to trade it. For increasingly mobile students, transferring credit is hardly as easy as getting change for a dollar. That's the downside of a decentralized system. And that system is under pressure. Achieving President Obama's ambitious higher-education goals will most likely require broadening the concept of creditworthiness while ensuring that it carries over from one institution to another.

Higher education needs a currency that is stable but adaptable. It may not guarantee quality, but if it can do a decent job of accounting, colleges will look to better measures of learning.

Judgments of Value

The awarding of credit is traditionally a faculty prerogative. Curriculum-review committees tend to approve credit awards, which have become less a sum of seat time and more an approximation of content. Assigning credits is second nature, professors say: Everybody knows what a three-credit course looks like.

Accrediting agencies check up, but not as stringently as federal regulators would like. The U.S. Department of Education proposed a definition of credit hour in June, out of concern that the agencies have no minimum standards (the department had rebuked the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in December for accrediting American InterContinental University, a for-profit institution, despite its nine-credit courses).

The proposal hews to the traditional measure, defining a credit hour as one hour of instruction and two of outside work each week for a semester—or "an equivalent amount of work" in a lab, studio, or internship, with equivalency "represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement."

But campus officials want to make determinations of creditworthiness themselves. Barring credit inflation, which they insist is not a problem, they trust the education and job markets to help standardize credit's value.

That value may not be apparent until credit is traded. Often, the credits that one college awards are not recognized by another. And even a credit accepted doesn't necessarily count toward general-education requirements or a major.

Transfer students tend to accumulate credits well beyond the 120 required for a degree. Among graduates of four-year institutions, students who start there earn, on average, 134 credits; those who transfer from other four-year institutions, 140 credits. Students who begin at two-year colleges rack up 144 credits, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Those excess credits represent wasted time and money, says a report calling for more credit "portability," to be released this month by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and the Center for American Progress, a think tank in Washington.

More than two-thirds of states have passed laws intended to ease the transfer of credit, by requiring, for example, common course-numbering systems at their public colleges. But most credit-transfer decisions still depend on "articulation": one faculty's determination of whether a course taken elsewhere is directly equivalent, or of equal quality, to its own. Hammering out an articulation agreement for all courses from one institution to another can involve philosophical discussions about, for example, what constitutes college-level algebra.

And are any two courses ever really equal? "When you start crossing institutional boundaries, there are some limits as to how seriously you can make this determination of equivalency," says Alexander C. McCormick, director of the National Survey of Student Engagement. "I don't think

it traces all the way to broader learning goals that an institution aims for," such as global competence or critical thinking.

H. Elizabeth Braker, an associate professor of biology at Occidental College, has closely examined courses at other institutions, some abroad, to decide if and how they should count. Some don't meet the college's standards, and their credits don't transfer. "We think we're the best," Ms. Braker says. "If students are graduating with an Occidental College biology degree, we want to be behind that."

Uneven Trade

Even within a single university system, articulation is hardly automatic.

"We should be able to solve it here at CUNY, because we're one university, and we're all in one city," says Julia Wrigley, associate university provost at the City University of New York. "But there are still difficult problems."

Take a student who completes Technical Mathematics I for four credits at Bronx Community College, and consider the system's wacky credit-transfer rules. If that student transferred to CUNY's College of Staten Island, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, or New York City College of Technology, those credits would be accepted as if for a similar course offered there (although for only three credits at John Jay). At three other senior colleges in the system, the Bronx course would transfer only as elective credit, which tends not to count toward a major. Only Staten Island would apply the transfer credit toward general-education requirements. And five other colleges in the system wouldn't accept transfer credit at all—unless, in two cases, the student had completed an associate degree.

The system's transfer-planning Web site reveals further disparities. The course that John Jay considers equivalent, Modern Mathematics, would be accepted for transfer credit at all five of the colleges that rejected the original course from Bronx. And that John Jay course, if transferred back to Bronx, would count differently, as Trigonometry and College Algebra.

Where students flow more frequently, paths tend to be smoother, says Ms. Wrigley. But otherwise, transfer is uneven, she says. "Sometimes it turns on interpersonal connections between departments." Given CUNY's high levels of transfer, professors are making recommendations to streamline its articulation process.

California's public colleges have embarked on various efforts to simplify the transfer of credits, but some of their projects haven't had the intended results. Last year, for example, a

comprehensive transfer review resulted in decisions by economics faculties on three of California State University's campuses to no longer accept credit for microeconomics and macroeconomics courses at community colleges where intermediate algebra wasn't a prerequisite.

Individual articulation agreements have become so confusing that the state passed a law last month that aims to standardize transfer through larger units: redesigned associate degrees.

Credit Alchemy

Some colleges promote liberal transfer policies, assuring prospective students that any credits they have already earned will count there, too. That approach, common at adult-oriented institutions and less-selective private colleges, seeks both to sustain enrollment and to help more students graduate.

Last year, to encourage transfer, California Lutheran University developed articulation agreements with 10 local community colleges. Staff members solicited the colleges' syllabi and consulted with its own professors, with the sense that most credits should transfer, says Maria T. Kohnke, registrar and associate provost of academic services. "Part of helping transfer students graduate on time," she says, "is making sure work they've done before they got here counts in every way that it can."

Maryville University, in St. Louis, regards regional accreditation as a seal of approval and accepts most credits from colleges with that designation. "It helps from a recruitment side," says Stephanie Elfrink, the registrar. "Students are more apt to go to an institution where it appears that they have accepted more credits."

For some students, the main goals are saving time and money. On online message boards, savvy students swap strategies for cobbling together credits.

"I've kind of learned how the system works," says Marianne Durling, a medical-coding instructor at Piedmont Community College, in North Carolina. Two years ago, with credits earned decades ago in other states, she was 18 shy of an associate degree. When she decided to pursue it, at the urging of her former boss at Vance-Granville Community College, she earned the necessary credits in one month through standardized tests from Excelsior College, a private institution known for online learning.

Since then, Ms. Durling has accumulated enough credits, mainly through tests, to complete two bachelor's degrees from Excelsior. Now she is pursuing online a master's in health administration

from Bellevue University, in Nebraska, which will increase her salary, she says, and open up other opportunities for employment.

Ms. Durling and other students chart their progress on DegreeForum.net, a message board administered by InstantCert Academy, a test-prep company. They seem to know how to convert almost anything into credit.

One popular approach is taking free online courses through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Independent Study Program. The American Council on Education recommends credit for some of them, but not all colleges will award it. Frederick Community College, however, usually will—and some of the same colleges that won't accept the credit "raw," as students say, will take it when transferred from Frederick, in Maryland. Students also favor "filtering" through Fort Hays State University, in Kansas, which will place courses from the online-learning company StraighterLine on a transcript, with letter grades, as its own.

A degree's worth of credits isn't necessarily an education. The 120 credits typically required to graduate should have coherence and structure, forming "not just a patchwork, but a tapestry," says Mr. McCormick, of the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Credit too easily granted can cause problems down the line. At the University of Maryland University College, many transfer students arrive with credit for introductory courses that another institution readily awarded for, say, a dubious workplace-training program. "It's a disservice to the students," says Susan C. Aldridge, the president. "If they haven't learned computational skills, problem solving, writing, math, ... then it becomes extremely difficult for them to succeed in their third and fourth year."

University College sometimes insists on placement tests, and it may not accept the transfer credit. "It would degrade the value and the quality of our degree," Ms. Aldridge says, "if we were just moving students along."

Credit for Training

A growing number of colleges of all types face the challenge of appraising students' existing knowledge. About 60 percent of institutions nationally now recognize "prior learning" and translate it into credit.

The practice began when a grateful nation welcomed soldiers back from World War I, and some colleges rewarded their military service by letting them start as sophomores. But they weren't necessarily prepared, and colleges called for closer matches between prior experience and

academic course work. The American Council on Education started evaluating military training and issuing specific credit recommendations in 1945. Three decades later, as more adults enrolled in higher education, the group began assessing many forms of workplace preparation.

Its College Credit Recommendation Service sends teams of professors to appraise training courses, professional certifications, and apprenticeship programs—9,081 of them to date. They visit classrooms and labs, scrutinize curricula and tests, and consult the Education Department's Classification of Instructional Programs, a national database of courses.

"If we find that there is significant enough evidence that this is something that is now being taught in a college classroom, then we'll go forward," says James Selbe, assistant vice president for lifelong learning at ACE. The group will recommend a certain number of credits in a specific discipline to guide colleges' decisions.

"They're really a credibility check on the academic integrity of the courses," Ms. Aldridge says.

There are no overall data on how many recommended credits colleges accept, but the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, a consortium whose members offer academic credit for military training and experience evaluated by ACE, keeps track: 753,654 semester-hours awarded in the 2009 fiscal year.

A head start toward a degree is no small motivator. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education recently found that adults with some college rated credit for prior learning, by test or assessment of a portfolio of work, the top reason they would be more interested in pursuing a degree. And according to a national study by the adult-learning council, students who received credit for prior learning had higher graduation rates than other students, and completed their degrees faster.

'Learning Counts'

For institutions that specialize in assessing students' prior learning, like Empire State College, part of the State University of New York, the decision seems clear-cut. "If they demonstrate competency, then we award credit," says Tai Arnold, assistant vice president for academic programs at Empire State.

But the process is far from simple. A student's proposal and portfolio go from an assessment office to a faculty evaluator and finally to a faculty committee. According to its written guidelines, Empire State looks for learning that is theoretical as well as practical and is equivalent in quality to college-level work.

Fees vary for colleges' assessments of prior learning, but students tend to pay for credits they've proposed at one-third to one-half the normal per-credit tuition charge. For-profits in particular are luring students with all but promises of credit. Kaplan University and the University of Phoenix, among others, reach out to companies, offering to assess employees' training for creditworthiness, and looking to enroll them as new students. A partnership between American Public University and Wal-Mart states similar goals.

Further expansion of prior-learning assessment would improve progress toward national attainment goals, says Pamela Tate, president and chief executive of the adult-learning council. "The only way it's going to grow to the scale it needs to grow to is if we do this on the national level."

Next month the council will introduce an online service, called Learning Counts: College Credit for What You Already Know. It will feature a six-week course to help current and prospective students prepare portfolios of their previous work.

About 200 students will enroll in the pilot round, a few from each of 70 institutions, including Concordia University in Irvine, Calif.; South Seattle Community College, and the University System of Georgia. Students will finish with a credit recommendation from ACE for the course itself and from faculty evaluators for their portfolios.

"We've got a five-year business plan to serve tens of thousands of people," Ms. Tate says.

One of the first will be Juanita Ervin, an administrative associate in the Georgia system. She finished her associate degree a decade ago, and although she wants to return to college, she says, as a single parent she has struggled to find time.

In the portfolio course, she plans to focus on skills she gained not only at the university, but also as a logistical specialist in the Army and a manager at a Wendy's restaurant. A bachelor's in business administration may then seem more possible, she says. "Any credits that I can get would make it a shorter and easier experience."

Whole degrees based on carefully measured competencies was the founding principle of Western Governors University, in 1997. "We said, Look, what's important here is that we measure learning rather than time," says Robert W. Mendenhall, president of the online institution, which substitutes proficiency tests for credits.

At traditional colleges, a credit award and letter grade signal only vaguely a student's ability, argues Philip A. Schmidt, associate provost for academic programs at Western Governors. "If a student gets a C," he says, "I don't know what that means."

The competency tests, however, provide a certainty that Mr. Schmidt, a mathematician, finds reassuring: "When I say to someone, 'Student X has passed Calculus 1 at WGU,' I know exactly what that means."

Still, to operate in the higher-education system, the university had to develop a way to translate students' competencies into credits. It does that by plugging a test's objectives and level of difficulty into an algorithm, generating "competency units."

Mr. Schmidt enjoys explaining the competency-based system to faculty reviewers on accreditation committees: "When they see all of it in operation, what they say is, 'I'd like to bring it back to my own campus, because it really makes sense.'"

A Limited Measure

As an accounting measure, the credit hour has long sufficed. If it remains consistent enough to keep student-aid formulas and other calculations fair, that is all it can do, higher-education officials say.

"It has face validity but no content validity," says Jane V. Wellman, executive director of the Delta Cost Project, which studies college spending and revenue, and a co-author of *How the Student Credit Hour Shapes Higher Education* (Jossey Bass, 2003).

As a proxy for learning, credit doesn't hold up. Even a national standard couldn't make it a more significant measure.

"The idea that somehow having a federal definition of 'credit hour' is going to guarantee quality or even quantity of learning being delivered, if not being received, is a fallacy," says Sylvia Manning, president of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Credit is, after all, still only a container. Imagine lining up 120 cups for the credits a student needs to graduate, says Thomas Ehrlich, coauthor of the credit-hour book and a visiting professor at Stanford University's School of Education. "One of them may be a quarter-full; one of them may be half-full," he says. "One of them may be overflowing."

Colleges need to focus not on the cups, but on filling them, Mr. Ehrlich says.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities agrees. As part of its Greater Expectations project over six years beginning in 2000, it encouraged institutions to move beyond the credit hour as a mark of equivalence in transfer, and instead try to develop consistent learning goals.

Such efforts may result in assessments, maybe tests, as a supplement to the credit-hour system. "You will see more emphasis on competency-based requirements for degrees," says Clifford Adelman, a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Still, competency tests cannot fully replace credits. For one thing, they produce a measure at the end of a course, but student aid must be disbursed at the beginning. Credit is an imperfect but indispensable measure.

"There's no other way to tie learning and resources together," says Ms. Wellman. "This does it in a nice way, unless people take it too literally."

Cabrillo's planned \$2.4 million cut to target employee benefits, salaries

By Tovin Lapan -- Santa Cruz Sentinel

Posted: 10/19/2010 04:10:47 PM PDT

Updated: 10/19/2010 04:11:26 PM PDT

APTOS - Cabrillo Community College has requested a reopening of benefits negotiations with its two major unions in anticipation of having to cut \$2.4 million from the school's 2011-12 budget.

Benefit and salary reductions will most likely hit employees in every component of the college's operations, from administration to instruction and student services.

"We feel that the budget solutions at the state level rely on faulty assumptions, such as increases in revenues we don't think will materialize," said Cabrillo Vice President of Administrative Services Victoria Lewis. "Our planning is not based fully on the state budget.... We are assuming that since it is an election year the 2010-11 budget will change things."

The projected budget deficit for Cabrillo in 2011-12 is \$3.6 million, but \$1.2 million in reserves has been used to help bridge that gap.

Additionally, for the 2010-11 budget, another \$1.2 million in reserves has been set aside in anticipation of budget changes once a new state budget is proposed in January. Earlier this year, to balance the 2010-11 budget, about \$60 million total, \$1.9 million in reserves was used.

Cabrillo has still not received \$8 million from the state that is credited to the 2009-10 budget, but was deferred. Now that a state budget has been signed, funding to community colleges should resume Wednesday, according to Lewis, but the state has not told the community colleges how much they can expect to receive nor on what schedule.

Cabrillo can borrow from the county while it waits on deferred funds from the state, however further deferrals could put the college in a precarious position in the spring.

"We will borrow from the county if state funding is delayed," Lewis said.

"The biggest worry is how the state will implement funding deferrals in the budget. We are concerned about continued deferrals or shifting of payments into the future."

The Cabrillo Classified Employees Union agreed to rollover its 2009 contract for 2010, with the added provision that the school could reopen negotiations on benefits and salary once per fiscal quarter, according to union President Stephanie Stainback. The negotiations would start in January.

In the contract, the Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers signed with the school earlier this year, Cabrillo is allowed to reopen salary and benefits negotiations every year.

Since 2008 Cabrillo has cut \$5.56 million from its budget. Earlier this year, Cabrillo canceled its month-long 2010-11 winter session, and is offering 400 fewer course sections this year than last.

Health care costs, which will be a significant part of the negotiations between the school and the unions, according to Lewis, have risen by \$2.5 million since July 2008.

"Every year more and more of the cost is shifted to employees," Stainback said. "Out of the employee groups at the college my bargaining unit makes the least, and the cost sharing of benefits has been proportionally very significant for this class of employees. But the district also pays a lot, and has absorbed even more paying for the low-level HMO plan. It has put the district in a difficult position. Our primary concern is the health of the college."

Each component - president's office, instruction, student services and administrative services - is being asked to reduce their budgets by an amount commensurate with their department's total percentage of the overall budget. Instruction, which constitutes almost 69 percent of the total spent on salaries and benefits at Cabrillo, is expected to cut over \$1.6 million from the \$35.2 million budgeted for this year.

The administration is looking at further cuts to operating costs, such as reducing utility costs, Lewis said, but that can only make up a limited portion of the shortfall as 87 percent of the total budget is employee salaries and other compensation.

"We have set aside reserves which have allowed the college planning time in making thoughtful reductions," Lewis said. "The primary goal is to preserve people and support student success. We start early, and the numbers will definitely change during the process."

El Camino College board plans to remove ill trustee

From staff reports

Posted: 10/17/2010 07:04:49 AM PDT

Updated: 10/18/2010 08:18:54 AM PDT

El Camino College board plans to remove ill trustee: The El Camino College board of trustees today will officially begin the process of removing a fellow board member who has been too sick to attend a meeting for more than a year.

Nathaniel Jackson, an elderly former dean at the school and the board's Inglewood representative, had surgery in fall 2009 and has been out since September of that year. Because he is sick, Jackson is not legally required to give up his seat or his \$400-a-month stipend, which he still collects.

In the meantime, the elected board of trustees has been operating with just four members.

At its regular 4 p.m. meeting today, the board will give official notice of a public hearing to be held Nov. 15 on whether to vacate Jackson's seat, which he's held for 15 years. The hearing will provide an opportunity for anyone who objects to his removal to speak up. If the board votes to vacate his seat on that night, it will have 60 days to either appoint a replacement or hold a special election.

A successor would serve until the end of Jackson's term in December 2011.

El Camino college to shake things up for drill

The Daily Breeze

From staff reports

Posted: 10/17/2010

Torrance. All students, faculty and staff at El Camino College will be among the millions of participants in this year's Great California ShakeOut, expected to be one of the largest preparedness events in U.S. history.

This statewide earthquake drill, spanning all 58 California counties, is planned for Thursday. When the alert sounds at 10:21 a.m., all El Camino College students, faculty and staff will drop to the ground, take cover by getting under a sturdy desk or table and hold on to it until the shaking stops.

Reunited After 68 Years

Compton Community College bestows honorary degrees to 43 Nisei.

October 21, 2010



Lily Ozaki Teraji smiles during a special graduation ceremony held at Compton Junior College Saturday. Honorary degrees were given to 43 former Nisei students in attendance. (MARIO G. REYES/Rafu Shimpo)

*By JORDAN IKEDA
Rafu Staff Writer*

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COMPTON, Calif.—Distance certainly wasn't a factor for the Nisei and their families who returned to Compton Community College on Saturday. Many traveled from all over the country to take part in a special graduation ceremony and receive honorary degrees long overdue.

“We were here on vacation about two weeks ago,” said Joe Haruto Hamada who hails from Ohio. “Got home on Friday, and on Sunday, Mr. Michael Odanaka finally found me. So, we just packed up a few things, and rushed back out.”

That's nearly 6,000 miles and eight days of driving in less than two weeks, just so Hamada didn't miss the graduation.

Actions like these speak far louder than words in describing the emotion and magnitude generated from Saturday's ceremony, a direct result of the California Nisei College Diploma

Project, which aims to award honorary college degrees to all Japanese Americans—living or deceased—whose postsecondary studies were derailed during World War II.

“It’s very emotional, very emotional,” Toshiko Yamauchi Tomooka said. “It’s wonderful for Compton College to do something for us.

According to Compton CC professor Michael Odanaka, who spearheaded putting the graduation together, 78 Nisei were identified as qualifying for honorary degrees. On Saturday, 43 of them claimed their diplomas in person while the relatives of a few others accepted on behalf of their kin, making Compton CC’s ceremony one of the biggest Nisei graduations to date.

“They have come from all over the country,” said Dr. Lawrence M. Cox, chief executive officer of Compton Community College District. “That just goes to show how much they care about Compton. It gives me great pride.”

The hundreds of others that attended the event, from family to friends to the graduates themselves, seemed to share that same sentiment, smiling, laughing, hugging, even shedding a few tears of joy.

Of course, all spent time reflecting.

“All we do is reminisce you know,” said Phyllis Matsushita Takekawa, who came from Minnesota to attend the graduation. “Even after all of these years, people seem to remember really well. And we’ve been separated for so long! I think we need something like this once in a while to renew old friendships.”

Takekawa reconnected with Hamada, Tomooka and several of their other friends who all happened to begin their education together in first grade back in 1930. The others include: Sachiko Takusagawa Minami, Bob Sugasawara, Margaret Matsushita Yoshida, Yukiye Sasaki Suzuki, and Hideko Tateoka Yamaguchi.

As part of the Compton JC library exhibit on display until Dec. 18, a single, black and white photo of the seven friends and their elementary school class connected six centuries worth of their collective lifetime experiences.

Sugasawara likened what he was feeling Saturday to an old Japanese fable, “*Urashima Tarō*.” The story tells the tale of a fisherman who rescues a turtle, is rewarded with a visit to the palace of the Dragon God, and then returns after three days to discover that 300 years have passed, and that everything is changed, and that he is an old, graying man.

“I don’t know what to say,” Sugasawara said. “I haven’t had this particular chance in 70 years. I’m meeting all my classmates, but I can’t recognize them, only the names.”

While physical appearances certainly have changed, a mere 80 years later, the memories remain just as vibrant.

“It’s been wonderful,” said Yamaguchi who came down from Fresno. “We had a get-together last night. No tears shed, just lots of hugging and smiles.”

Yoshida, who flew in from New Jersey, explained the group’s progression through education. How they began together at McKinley Elementary School, moved on to Enterprise Jr. High, then up to Compton High, before the war scattered them across the United States.



Circle of friends: from left, Bob Sugasawara, Phyllis Matsushita Takekawa, Hideko Tateoka Yamaguchi, Yukiye Sasaki Suzuki, Margaret Matsushita Yoshida and Joe Haruto Hamada. (MARIO G. REYES/Rafu Shimpo)

Yoshida spent four years in Manzanar. Yamaguchi at Gila River and Tule Lake. Hamada's family voluntarily moved to Colorado where they came to own a farm. Takekawa found herself in Minnesota. Only Sugasawara and Minami returned to Southern California after the war.

Saturday, they reconvened together, the first time they had returned to the college in nearly 68 years.

Assemblyman Warren T. Furutani (D-Gardena), who sponsored a bill that helped launch the California Nisei Diploma Project last year and was the keynote speaker Saturday, was certain that

“It’s a teaching moment,” said Furutani about the honorary degree ceremonies. “It’s not about nostalgia. It’s not about walking down memory lane. It’s an opportunity to teach people about a very important period in American history.”

The school has in fact spent the entire month educating its faculty and student body on World War II, Japanese American incarceration, and Executive Order 9066.

In addition to the library exhibit that features books, photos, yearbooks, memorabilia and articles from 1941-42, earlier this month the college showcased the film “Rabbit in the Moon” by Emiko Omori and featured a lecture by Alan Nishio, both bringing to life the struggles JAs endured during WWII. Next month, oral presentations from the college’s speech courses will be given on the internment and war.

But nothing compares to firsthand knowledge and experience. And thanks to the 43 who attended Saturday, Compton JC’s Nisei honorary degree ceremony was overflowing with both.

“I’m glad that I did come, and I got to see all of my old friends,” said Minami. “It’s truly a memorable occasion.”

Independence sought for Compton College

The Daily Breeze

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/24/2010 07:03:56 AM PDT

When El Camino College near Torrance rescued Compton College from total shutdown due to rampant fraud four years ago, many in the Compton community were grateful.

But now, the patience of some Compton politicians and clergy leaders regarding the speed of restoring the Compton campus's independence is wearing thin.

Led by prominent Compton-area politicians such as state Assemblyman Isadore Hall, D-Los Angeles, and Carson City Councilman Mike Gipson, a group of dissenters is beginning to point fingers at El Camino.

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Gen and other El Camino officials say they are frustrated by the accusatory tone of some of the group's misgivings. For instance, on Monday night, many in the Compton group insinuated that the El Camino board has plans to fire Larry Cox, the Compton campus's popular CEO, or head administrator.

"The board has zero say in his evaluations," Gen said. "He's not even our employee to fire."

Rather, he said, Cox is the employee of Compton's state-appointed trustee, Peter Landsberger, who serves as a one-man college board in place of the Compton district's now-powerless five-member elected board.

Landsberger said Cox's contract doesn't expire until June, and discussions on extending it will occur sometime before this January, as is custom.

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"We were not asking for anything special - just to be given the same respect as the other board members," said LeBlanc of the Compton board.

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Disingenuous incumbents need to go

The Sun - Viewpoints

Unsigned

Published: Sunday, October 17, 2010

The Issue: The very future of Southwestern College is at stake this Nov 2.

Our Position: We endorse Hernandez, Nader and Saenz-Gonzalez for the governing board.

On November 2 an unprecedented election will take place. It is the most controversial governing board race in Southwestern College history and the most important. In school board elections, single votes can sway a victory. It is imperative that the students at SWC make their voices heard at the polls. Their academic futures depend on it.

With mind-boggling bungling and corruption that has tarnished SWC the past three years, it is very doubtful that the college will retain its accreditation if the three incumbent board members up for re-election are given another term. They will almost certainly be one-year terms because SWC's proverbial clock is ticking. Our time is almost up.

As incumbent board member Dr. Jorge Dominguez said at a recent candidate's forum, take the time to critically think about the information provided by candidates. Decide for yourselves what's fact or fiction. We've seen and heard a lot of fiction on the campaign trail.

Fiction: Dominguez said, "All you have to do is call the President's office" to find out information about the college.

Fact: Many constituent groups on campus have difficulty obtaining even basic information from Dr. Raj K. Chopra's office. The Sun has had a very difficult time communicating with the president, who has not granted the student newspaper an interview for nearly two years.

Fiction: Many incumbents stated it was imperative for all groups on campus to participate in the decision-making processes on campus in order to achieve true "transparency." The implication is their input will be valued.

Fact: The current administration is infamous for its exclusionary top-down management. Both the faculty and classified union on campus have voted No Confidence in Chopra because he is not capable of working collaboratively with constituent groups. While the ASO has never officially voted No Confidence, former ASO President Chris DeBauche asked the governing board to discuss alternatives to cutting 26 percent of the remaining classes. The governing board incumbents unanimously voted to cut classes.

Fiction: Yolanda Salcido's suggestion that former SWC President Norma Hernandez abandoned the college ("in the middle of the road, in the middle of the night") and is responsible for a number of the current accreditation problems.

Fact: Hernandez did retire from SWC suddenly because the board, which Salcido was a member of, fired a vice president just hours after Hernandez had hired her. They then rewrote college

policy to cover their tracks. State accreditation officials severely criticized Salcido and the board for their offense, one of the reasons SWC was slapped with probation. The board was cited for micromanagement. Salcido should be ashamed of these statements.

Fiction: Dominguez stated that a consultant company hired by SWC said the college had too many classes, hence the 26 percent cut.

Fact: The consultant company, Maas, did communicate that classes run at the college were not as efficient as they could have been. To insinuate that an inefficient class schedule somehow justifies a 40 percent class cut over a three-semester span is absurd. Classes are now being run at a high efficiency rate, however, students struggle finding the classes they need. More than 600 classes were lost.

Fiction: Salcido said she believes Chopra has done a good job and is "extremely qualified."

Fact: Chopra, a career K-12 administrator, has been clearly overmatched since Day One at SWC. In a survey of faculty Chopra received a failing grade on nearly 90 percent of the questions. (Ironically enough he still received a positive review by the board.) His authoritarian leadership style was out of sync with California's shared governance laws and created a toxic campus climate.

SWC's board is guilty of not doing its due diligence. Had members looked into Chopra's background they would have found a rocky and troubled history of abusive behavior and abrupt goodbyes. Before being hired at SWC, board members who supported him in his previous post in Phoenix were voted out and he later resigned under the newly appointed board. If by "good job" Salcido is referring to the ability of a college president to balance a school budget on the backs of students for the sake of a good bond rating, then perhaps she is right.

Fiction: Dominguez said the board has never limited the amount of time individuals can speak at a governing board meeting.

Fact: After the second reorganization in April 2009, the governing board decided members of the public were no longer able to lend their allotted three minutes to other people who wished to speak longer. Recently the board has stuck reports by faculty representatives at the end of the agenda and has adjourned meetings without letting them speak.

Fiction: Dominguez said, "SWC is where it is supposed to be."

Fact: SWC is currently on WASC probation for 10 deficiencies that are threatening our accreditation for the first time in the college's history. If the college does not make some major changes by March it will go to "show cause," the final stop before being closed-permanently-as Compton College was closed.

Since the "Top 10" came out only one has been officially resolved. In the meantime, the college was the recipient of the infamous Thomas Jefferson Muzzle Award for stifling free speech. The class cuts made at SWC outnumber those made by all other regional colleges combined, and a number of signature programs, including the award-winning debate team and the student newspaper, were put in jeopardy after reassigned time was cut for several advisors as retaliation.

The culture on campus is one of fear and intimidation. SWC is definitely not where it is supposed to be. In the words of challenging candidate Tim Nader, "To believe that, you'd have to been an incumbent."

Fiction: Incumbent governing board members say no full-time teacher was lost due to the 40 percent class cuts.

Fact: This is a lie by omission. While many governing board incumbents like to say no "full-time" teachers were lost due to the cuts, more than 400 part time adjunct faculty lost positions. Adjuncts play a vital role to our course diversity and teach most classes. Losing them was just as devastating as losing any professor-full time or not.

Fiction: Dominguez thanked a faculty member for submitting a question asking whether or not the superintendent was the right person for the job.

Fact: Albert Fulcher, a senior staff writer for the Sun, wrote that question. Dominguez's snide remark was illustrative of the board's attitude toward students.

Fiction: Salcido stated that Chopra never lies to the board.

Fact: Governing board member Nick Aguilar has repeatedly voiced concern about getting incomplete and inaccurate information from the president's office. Aguilar, who during 24 years of service to San Diego County school boards has earned a reputation for being thorough and well prepared, frequently does not receive responses regarding concerns he has or information requests he has made.

Our incumbent board members' behavior at the forum was startling but not surprising. We have almost become accustomed to their antics, uncivil behavior, deceit and incompetence. The Southwestern College Sun Editorial Board-22 strong-unanimously urges voters of the Southwestern Community College District to restore credibility, hope and accreditation to the college by electing Tim Nader, Norma Hernandez and Jesseca Saenz-Gonzalez on November 2.

You may never make a more important vote for this community.

Community college students vexed by placement tests

California WatchBlog

October 21, 2010 | Louis Freedberg

Community college students arrive uninformed and unprepared to take a battery of tests that assign them to either college-level or remedial classes – high-stakes exams that could have a profound impact on their future.

That's the finding of a new report by WestEd [PDF], an independent research organization based in San Francisco.

The report found that less than half of the colleges surveyed even provide practice tests for students. And even when practice tests are available, many students don't know they are available or don't think they should prepare for them.

Perhaps most importantly, most students who took the tests in math and English did not understand that their performance on the test would decide what classes they could take, whether they could begin earning college credits and how long it would take for them to complete their planned course of study.

Why is this important?

Because once students are assigned to remedial, noncredit classes, the odds of making it to higher-level credit courses are extremely low.

Only 25 percent of students who start in a basic-skills reading class even attempt a transfer-level English course, according to a 2007 National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education report [PDF]. For students in basic math classes, the outcome is even worse: Only 10 percent ever attempt a transfer-level class. In fact, "those who begin at the lowest levels of basic skills are unlikely to achieve a degree or transfer to a university."

The poor performance of most students on these assessment tests is at least one reason that only 30 percent of community college students seeking an associate degree or wishing to transfer to a four-year college achieve their goals within six years. (These and other findings were reported in a CSU Sacramento study released this week.)

For many students, remedial classes are essential. But the WestEd report strongly suggests that with more preparation and knowledge about the importance of the placement tests, many more students would pass them and earn the right to take college-level transfer courses. That in turn would considerably improve their chances of succeeding in college.

The entire assessment picture is complicated by the fact that each of California's 112 community college campuses decides what test to administer. Most colleges use the College Board's ACCUPLACER to assess students' abilities in math and English, but many administer their own tests. According to the 2007 report cited above, "nearly 100 different examinations are used for placement purposes across the state."

Another complicating factor is that the scores for determining whether a student is placed in a remedial class also vary from college to college. "Some of the students we interviewed had received different placements at two different colleges based on the same test scores," the WestEd report concluded. "Such variation in cut scores can send mixed signals to high school students about what qualifies as college readiness."

Even after students take the test, "they remain confused ... throughout their college experience." Many feel that they are stuck in basic skills courses "with no way to advance more quickly even if they are motivated to do so ... Both students and counselors voiced concerns that many students in such predicaments drop out."

What, then, should be done? Some of the recommendations include tying the tests more closely to the high school curriculum, assessing students while they are still in high school and providing summer boot camps for incoming students. Beyond that, high school students should get clear information about the placement tests that await them. That in turn will mean coming up with a more uniform set of tests and comparable cut-off scores to replace the confusing patchwork system that exists across the state and effectively traps many students into low-level classes from which they will never escape.

Student sets sights on Mars

Easy Reader

By **Robb Fulcher** | October 25th, 2010

Ground control to Vito Iaia, Ground Control to Vito Iaia: report to Johnson Space Center.

Iaia, a 22-year-old Hermosan majoring in physics at El Camino College, has responded to NASA's call and flown to Houston along with 89 other U.S. students who won a NASA contest to develop missions using robotic explorers like the Mars rovers.

Iaia (pronounced Eye-ay-ah) won his spot by scoring an average 96 out of 100 points in a four-part test requiring him to design and propose a robotic exploration mission, complete with timelines, cost estimates and renderings of the mission's hardware.

At the space center until the end of the week, Iaia and his peers are forming teams to establish Mars exploration "companies," build tiny rover prototypes, and go deeper into their space studies. Along the way they were to tour the space center, and see presentations by astronauts and other NASA technology experts.

In addition to Iaia, two other El Camino students made the cut for Houston, Brett Lopez of El Segundo and Kendrick Roberson of Carson.

To get to Houston, Iaia developed a hypothetical mission to determine whether any locations on Mars would be habitable by humans. He designed two robotic rovers and detailed how they would explore sections of the red planet, testing the soil, environmental conditions and probing for any possible existence of water, with the help of satellites above.

He said his rovers were similar to the existing Spirit and Opportunity, but more aerodynamic in shape and "futuristic" in appearance, and with modifications to some of the robotic equipment.

The NASA test required him to produce an abstract overview of his mission, create a timeline and budget for it, write a detailed proposal pitching the mission, and produce renderings of his rovers.

He considered the renderings the toughest task, but he scored 100 out of 100 with his freehand line drawings.

The timeline also presented difficulties. For instance, the shortest route from Earth to Mars is not a straight line.

"You can't go to Mars on a straight shot," he said. "They use an elliptical orbit." As he continues to probe space, Iaia thinks often of a lifelong friend, Jake Ortiz, who recently passed away after providing support and encouragement to Iaia in his studies and his life.

“He was a big inspiration in going to school, and keeping this going,” Iaia said. Iaia didn’t grow up dreaming of space, but the NASA project has tuned his ears to the call of the final frontier.

“I can’t say I was a super space geek before this. But I like to see how things are put together and how they are used. This goes well with physics, engineering and math interests, and I started getting really interested in astronomy,” he said.

“I have really enjoyed this,” he said, “but I have never done so much research.” ***ER***

Jury rules for El Camino College in harassment case on all but one charge

The Daily Breeze

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/22/2010

A jury on Friday ruled mostly in favor of El Camino College in a sexual harassment and discrimination case filed against the Torrance-area school by a former dean who claimed she was the victim of a "good old boys" club.

Although most of the charges were tossed by the judge, the 12-member jury in Torrance Superior Court did award Kristi Blackburn, the community college's former dean of fine arts, \$45,000 for breach of contract.

All told, however, the verdict was a victory for the college and a disappointment for Blackburn, whose allegations that an El Camino administrator had created a hostile work environment, retaliated against her and subjected her to sexual harassment and gender discrimination were thrown out by Judge Michael Vicence.

"The college is pleased that it was exonerated on all discrimination allegations," said El Camino's attorney, Larry Frierson. "Many college representatives have spent large amounts of time defending the allegations in this case. They are pleased that they can now return to educating students at El Camino College."

He added that the college may appeal the breach-of-contract decision.

The judge's narrowing of the scope left just two main items for the jury to consider. The first centered on a contractual dispute: Blackburn claimed the college broke an administrator's promise to grant her a raise - from \$110,000 to \$114,000 - after six months on the job. On this, the jury agreed.

The second claim was the sole discrimination-based complaint not thrown out by the judge. It alleged that the administrator in question - El Camino Vice President Francisco Arce - began to mistreat Blackburn after seeing a photo on her desk depicting Blackburn, who is white, with her husband, who is black. The jury disagreed.

But despite the victory for the college, the head juror has publicly come forth to say she believes not all of the discrimination and harassment charges should have been tossed.

"We definitely as a jury felt there was discrimination and a hostile environment," said the juror, Emma Biggs.

She went on to say that Arce came off as "a very negative person" on the stand. She also cited the testimony of two tenured faculty members, who said they feared they would be retaliated against for answering questions on the stand.

"We knew something had to be going on deeper than we were seeing," Biggs said.

Blackburn's attorney, Steven Haney, said his client plans to appeal the decision.

"We felt the jury should have been given all of the claims and evidence, and have confidence we will ultimately prevail on appeal," he said.

Haney said that had they gotten the damages they were seeking, the total award would have approached \$350,000.

Blackburn, currently a dean at Los Angeles Harbor College, alleges that Arce made sexually suggestive comments to her and retaliated against her for standing up for her secretary who had asked for overtime pay. The secretary later filed and won her own internal hostile work environment complaint against the college, with Blackburn testifying on her behalf.

Blackburn's complaint also accused Arce of making sexually suggestive comments about another woman who has filed a separate claim against the college: Carmen Hunt, a professor of communications.

According to Blackburn's affidavit, Arce told Blackburn that Hunt is "beautiful, intelligent and litigious" and that he "had to focus above Hunt's neck and `constantly remind' himself not to `look below her neck."

"These kinds of comments contributed to an already intimidating and oppressive environment," the affidavit says.

But Judge Vicence threw that allegation out of court for lack of sufficient evidence.

The case, which began Oct. 13, was rocky from the get-go for Blackburn, with Vicence frequently interrupting her sometimes wordy testimony, telling her - at times testily - to keep her answers focused to the confines of her attorney's questions. He also expressed exasperation with Haney, sustaining the majority of a relentless stream of objections raised by Frierson, the college's attorney.

The trial kicked off a trio of intertwined cases against El Camino. One will be that of the secretary, Nyesha Artiaga, who - in yet another, unrelated complaint - claims her boss (not Arce but another current employee) groped her on multiple occasions, and threatened to fire her if she refused to have sex with him.

Another one was filed by Hunt, the professor of communications, who is accusing the district of illegally putting together a secret set of personnel documents - known as "shadow files" - in an effort to fire her in retaliation for going on extended leave for medical reasons. Hunt, too, said she was sexually assaulted by a former administrator, though that accusation is not a central part of her current claim. Her trial is set to start Jan. 3.

As for the Blackburn case, also thrown out by the judge was her claim that the college failed to adequately compensate her for the extra duties she took on when the El Camino College unexpectedly took over Compton College in 2006.

Small business assistance

South Bay / Harbor Area business calendar

The Daily Breeze

From staff reports
Posted: 10/22/2010

Monday. The Small Business Development Center is offering free, by appointment, assistance with business plans to increase sales and to apply for a loan from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at El Camino College Business Training Center, 13430 Hawthorne Blvd., Hawthorne. Call 973-3177 for information.

Independence sought for Compton College

The Daily Breeze

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 10/24/2010 07:03:56 AM PDT

When El Camino College near Torrance rescued Compton College from total shutdown due to rampant fraud four years ago, many in the Compton community were grateful.

But now, the patience of some Compton politicians and clergy leaders regarding the speed of restoring the Compton campus's independence is wearing thin.

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Three finalists chosen for Peralta chancellor

By Matt Krupnick

Contra Costa Times

Posted: 10/22/2010 05:03:11 PM PDT

Updated: 10/22/2010 07:04:36 PM PDT

OAKLAND -- Two Southern Californians and a Florida administrator have been chosen as finalists for the chancellor's position at the Peralta Community College District.

Peralta leaders will interview Ed Gould, president and superintendent of Imperial Valley College, east of San Diego; Lawrence Cox, CEO of the Compton Community College District in Los Angeles County; and Edna Chun, a vice president at Florida's Broward College.

The candidates will visit the East Bay in late November, Peralta Trustee Abel Guillen said Friday. The district is searching for a replacement for former Chancellor Elihu Harris, who was ousted by the board this year after a series of missteps, including raises given improperly to administrators and a no-bid contract he steered to a longtime business partner and friend.

Gould arrived at Imperial Valley in 2008 after serving as a dean at Capella University, a for-profit online school. He also has worked in the statewide community-college chancellor's office and has held leadership positions at several community colleges, according to his biography on the Imperial Valley College website.

Cox has run the Compton district since 2008, taking the reins of a system recovering from a corruption scandal that led to a state takeover. He previously held administrative positions at colleges in Ohio, Illinois and Tennessee.

Chun, who holds advanced degrees in music and East Asian languages, is vice president for human resources and equity at the Florida college, which changed its name from Broward Community College when it started offering bachelor's degrees last year. She has written two books about diversity among students and college employees.

New chancellor for Saddleback, Irvine Valley colleges

By KRISTY CHU
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MISSION VIEJO – Gary Poertner, the South Orange County Community College District deputy chancellor for administrative and business services, has been appointed chancellor for the district.

Poertner, voted in Monday night by the district board of trustees, will oversee some 43,000 students at Saddleback College, Irvine Valley College and the district's newest campus, the Advanced Technology and Education Park in Tustin. The district has 2,600 employees and a \$446 million budget.



Gary Poertner
PHOTO COURTESY OF SOCCCD

Poertner brings more than 40 years of experience to the job having been an administrator at campuses such as College of the Redwoods and El Camino College, and at the Shasta Union High School District, according to a news release.

He served as deputy chancellor for the district for 11 years, overseeing fiscal operations, human resources and information technology. He also was involved in the development of ATEP.

"I am delighted with my appointment as Chancellor of this outstanding community college district, which is so highly respected," Poertner said in the release. "I appreciate the confidence the board of trustees has shown in my abilities to lead this organization with two excellent colleges. I have prepared for over 40 years to assume this responsibility, and I am anxious to begin the challenge."

He will start Dec. 1, taking the reins from interim chancellor Dixie Bullock. Bullock was named acting chancellor following the resignation of Raghu Mathur in June.

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Chancellor committee chooses final prospects

[Kale Williams](#)

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Three finalists have been chosen for the vacant position of Peralta Community College District Chancellor.

The three candidates, Edna Chun, Ed Gould, and Lawrence Cox are scheduled to visit the district in late November, according to Peralta Trustee Abel Guillen.

Chun, who currently serves as the vice president for Human Resources and Equity at Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, earned her doctoral degree from the Indiana University School of Music and a Master of Arts from Columbia University in East Asian Languages. She is the author of two books on diversity in higher education and is a sought-after lecturer on the subject, according to her website.

Gould currently serves as president and superintendent of Imperial Valley College, which is located east of San Diego. Before his service at Imperial Valley, Gould was the Associate Dean for Higher Education and Corporate Programs in the School of Education at Capella University, an online college based in Minnesota. He was a middle school counselor and taught parent education to adults for several years.

Cox currently serves as the provost/CEO of the Compton Community College District, which has had similar problems with accreditation to those of the Peralta District.

Whoever gets the job will face a daunting task. The new chancellor will inherit a district facing drastic budget cuts and a probationary accreditation status.

The current interim chancellor, Wise Allen, took the reins from an embattled Elihu Harris, whose contract was not renewed after allegations of financial mismanagement and favoritism.