

Good news from Compton Center

The Compton Bulletin, 2011-08-31 / News

Accreditation slow in coming but enrollment up at the college

By Cheryl Scott

Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—El Camino Compton Center is open for business and enrollment is up. That's the word from Special Trustee Genethia Hudley-Hayes, who is continuing the lead the effort to secure accreditation from the Accrediting Committee for Junior and Community Colleges.

The accreditation process continues to be controversial, and the Committee to Save Compton College and the Concerned Citizens of Compton have expressed a lack of confidence in El Camino's intent to get the college re-accredited.

Hudley-Hayes, who was appointed earlier this year, has said that statements released by the district regarding progress made toward accreditation were not supported by the CCCD figures.

Hudley-Hayes bought out the contract of CEO Dr. Lawrence Cox, a move that outraged the college's support groups.

Nonetheless, the college's enrollment is up to its highest level since 2006, and the selection of classes satisfies the community's needs, with a variety of occupational programs as well as courses that earn credit toward a four-year degree.

The college has earned praise for its nursing program, which has continued uninterrupted through the loss of accreditation, largely because the program's administrators began working with El Camino College beforehand.

"We knew the college would lose its accreditation," Dean of Nursing Wanda Morris said. "It was inevitable. So we began several months before that happened to interact with each other so that we could accomplish a seamless transition once the partnership began in August 2007."

The nursing program has been important to the community of Compton since it was established in 1953. Since the partnership with El Camino College began in August 2007, the program has grown. "The nursing program is even more successful now than it was before the partnership," Morris said. "The partnership has given our students more resources and tools that enhance their education and their ability to pass the NCLEX-RN test, which they must do in order to become registered nurses."

In April the Compton Center launched a new wireless, high fidelity patient simulation lab that has the look and feel of a real hospital. The "patients" are mannequins that actually breathe, cry,

sweat and bleed. They are programmed to perform complex scenarios and respond physiologically to treatment provided by the students.

“The students profit from the experience in the simulation lab because it is not as intimidating as an actual clinical setting,” said Morris. “Their actions and reactions are taped so they can be viewed and debriefed. Students appreciate the experience of providing their own critique.”

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According to David Gonzales, CACT (Centers for Applied Competitive Technologies) director at El Camino College, there is no program like Compton Center’s Aerospace Fastener Boot Camp in the western United States.

“One thing that will always be needed in any industry is nuts and bolts,” he told the Bulletin. “The aerospace industry in particular needs fasteners that are unique and must be made on highly specialized equipment. The fastener industry serves military needs as well as other industrial needs throughout the country. And 40 percent of fasteners are made in Southern California.”

The fastener market totaled \$6 billion in 2008, \$4.6 billion of that in the local area. There are approximately 56 companies located in the immediate area. And they all need employees.

El Camino College CEO Dr. Thomas Fallo is confident that the college will be accredited again. “It’s a very exacting and slow process,” he told The Bulletin. “There are many steps that have to be taken and we have designed a timeframe that takes each requirement into consideration. It involves the work of faculty, administrative staff at both campuses as well as the Compton Community College District. In the meantime we are developing our academic program with the highest standards.

The college will be accredited as a satellite campus of El Camino Community College. Once that happens, the college will be transferred back to the Compton Community College District.

“ This is a situation that has not happened before,” said then-Special Trustee Peter Landsberger. “We don’t know exactly how that will happen. We will decide at that time the administrative process that will be used to transfer the college back to the district.”

If the accreditation process is bogged down, as the Committee to Save Compton College says, students in the community are still able to continue their education at a location in the city. The quality of that education has not been compromised despite the problems that are encountered on the way to accreditation.

“” We are very optimistic,” said Fallo. “The students want to come here and that is proven by our enrollment figures. In fact, Compton Center reached full enrollment before El Camino College did. That’s very exciting.”

Approximately 41 percent of the college's students are receiving financial aid. "We are very fortunate to be able to offer financial aid to deserving students," Fallo said. "In the face of rising tuition from \$780 to \$1080 for full-time students, that's a critical element for many Compton students, as it is in other cities."

Anyone who wants to know how the Compton Center is faring during a tough economy need only pass by the school during the day. "Our parking lot is full," Fallo said. "And cars are parked all up and down Artesia. There's also a new energy on the campus that is very satisfying."

Students at Compton Center are showing a high level of enthusiasm and an awareness that they are setting themselves up for success in the future.

It may take more time, but recent activity on the campus suggests that the worst is over at the college, and that accreditation and return to local control is on its way back.

El Camino threatens to leave partnership with CCCD

Compton Bulletin 2011-09-07 / Front Page

Disagreement over budget stated as cause
By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

TORRANCE—El Camino President Dr. Thomas Fallo notified Chancellor of Education Jack Scott that the college intends to withdraw from the partnership between the El Camino Community College District, the Compton Community College District and the California Community College Chancellor's Office if budgetary matters cannot be resolved.

The announcement was made in a public statement distributed to the staff and faculty of El Camino Community College and the El Camino Compton Center stating that Fallo had sent a letter to Scott on June 17 citing a memorandum of understanding that allows El Camino to withdraw from the partnership if Fallo does not concur with the budget submitted by the CCCD.

However, the memorandum of understanding expired in December 2010 and a new one has not been put in place yet. Once notified of El Camino's intent to leave the partnership, the state chancellor has 90 days in which to resolve the issue. That time period is up on Sept. 13.

According to our sources, Scott responded to the notification, asking Fallo to draft a new MOU, which Fallo declined to do. Former Special Trustee Thomas Henry is reportedly working on a draft agreement.

The public statement did not specify the issues of concern in the budget, but sources speaking on condition of anonymity have said that it is money being spent by Special Trustee Genethia Hudley-Hayes on consultants.

According to our sources, Hudley-Hayes has hired a bodyguard and an event coordinator at a cost of more than \$100,000 a year each. She has reportedly also hired a consultant for a variety of duties ranging from government matters to community affairs.

The CCCD recently laid off nine classified employees because the state budget has reduced funding for community colleges.

CCCD Chief Business Officer Danny Villanueva is set to present the budget for the upcoming fiscal year at a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee on Sept. 8. If approved by the committee it will go before the CCCD Board of Trustees for ratification on Sept. 12.

It is expected that Fallo will decide at that time whether to go forward with the withdrawal from the partnership.

The partnership was made possible by AB 318, a bill introduced in the state Assembly by Rep. Mervyn Dymally after Compton College lost its accreditation in 2006. El Camino Community College District agreed to operate the college as El Camino College Compton Center, assuming responsibility for academic programs, personnel matters and all aspects of the day-to-day operations of the Center.

The Compton Community College District still exists, and is helping El Camino get the Center accredited as a new college operated by El Camino. El Camino will then turn the college back over the CCCD, returning it to local control.

The bill was passed in an effort to keep a college open in the city of Compton. Had a partner not been found to operate the college, it would have been forced to close. It lost its accreditation because of mishandling of funds that left it without enough money to meet its payroll.

A financial crisis management team was called in to investigate the operation of the college, and a report was issued enumerating the deficiencies at the college.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has set forth a detailed plan for the application for accreditation.

The process is expected to take at least 10 years from the date of lost accreditation because of the complexity of the improvements that must be made by the college.

If El Camino should withdraw from the partnership it will be required to find another college district willing to take its place. The announcement reassured the faculty and staff that it would stay in the partnership until a new partner agrees to operate the Center.

The CCCD has existed as an autonomous college district since 1927. It is supported by local taxpayers, who voted in 2005 to approve a \$100 million bond measure for the construction of new buildings on the campus. The bond measure was approved by 78 percent of the voters.

“This would be the very first community college in the state to lose its accreditation,” said Cheryl Fong, spokesperson for then- Chancellor Marshall Drummond, at the time. “We can’t let that happen. We need to keep the college autonomous if at all possible. Community support is one element in the overall effort to reinstate the college’s accreditation.”

Hudley-Hayes was appointed special trustee to the CCCD by Scott in January 2010, replacing Peter Landsberger, who retired after more than four years in the position.

The special trustee position was created in 2005, after the ACCJC revoked Compton College’s accreditation. The special trustee is there as a representative of the state Board of Education and has control of the District and its Board of Trustees.

Hudley-Hayes formerly served as president of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education and as an executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King Legacy Association.

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Conflict resolution service helps to limit municipal drama

The Beach Reporter

by Eric Michael Stitt

(Updated: Wednesday, August 31, 2011 5:16 PM PDT)

With neighboring houses about an arm's length away and nearly 20,000 residents packed into a city that's just more than a square mile, there's bound to be some drama.

Barking dogs, noisy parties, property wars, loud music and overhanging trees are very common complaints heard by the South Bay Center for Dispute Resolution.

The nonprofit organization is headquartered in Hermosa Beach at Fourth Street near Prospect Avenue and is led by resident Lance Widman, who is a former mayor and school board member. The center also deals with landlord and tenant issues, such as evictions and security deposits; business-related problems involving repairs, refunds and warranties; employee/employers conflicts; trouble between family members or friends; and construction complaints. Widman said he absolutely relishes helping people with issues that wouldn't seem too serious in other people's lives, but are important to them.

"I'm here to work with you. If you want to, I'm your guy," the 40-year El Camino political science teacher tells people. "Working with them, talking with them, trying to be nonjudgmental. I'm just kind of a gatekeeper. It's all about empathy."

The SBCDR, which has been around for about 20 years, is paid for through the city's general fund. Hermosa Beach annually contracts to pay the center \$8,000 per year for its services. SBCDR charges an annual fee of \$3,200 along with a maximum of 32 cases totaling \$4,800, City Manager Steve Burrell said.

Widman first contracted with Redondo Beach in the early 1990s and then quickly picked up Hermosa Beach. Then Manhattan Beach started contracting for the services in the mid-90s, followed by Torrance in the late 90s and recently Lawndale. Redondo Beach pays \$18,000 for a maximum of 72 cases and Torrance spends \$16,500 for 70. Manhattan Beach is charged \$11,000 for 52, Widman said. And if the center doesn't hit the maximum caseload, it doesn't get paid in full. If it exceeds the limit, they work for free, Widman said.

"We try to get situations resolved," Widman said. "Police don't have the time ... we help satisfy the residents."

Widman primarily works the cases, but does bring in other mediators when needed, he said.

Burrell said the SBCDR is an advantageous organization for the city. He said non-emergency issues that would clog police service are almost always successfully dealt with through the center's services.

"It's very important and a very effective program. They're very responsive," Burrell said. "They get (issues) resolved."

Police Chief Greg Savelli said they refer people to the SBCDR very often because officers don't have time to provide this type of service.

"It's a valuable option to have available," Savelli said. "Conflict resolution services are valuable to our community because we live so close to each other. (There is) very little space between homes, yards and driveways. Conflicts arise sometimes over the smallest matters, and this service helps put all involved back into the perspective of wanting to be good neighbors to each other."

When conflicts can't be fixed with a compromise, Widman forwards his report to the city prosecutor.

Then, if any violations are taking place, the city will take legal action. But most of the time, he's successful in orchestrating handshakes between feuding neighbors. And he has a lifetime of stories regarding disputes that are anything from hilarious to mean, disrespectful and absolutely shocking.

Widman said, "Where do I start?" when flipping through his memory of mediating. Out of a few that came to mind was one man's complaint about his neighbor's overgrown juniper bushes.

He said when the scrub owner was away on vacation, the upset neighbor grabbed a chainsaw and completely cut down the junipers. Then he stacked all the fire-log-sized wood against their wall.

Without a witness, police were unable to charge the man. But Widman was able to get the person to confess and he eventually helped pay to replace the vegetation.

Another story involved wind chimes that were apparently being heard from three blocks away. The owner loved the sound, but a neighbor dreaded it enough to sneak over and glue the wind chimes into "five pounds of twisting bronze," Widman said.

Widman said each case is unique and seems like the most important thing to those involved. So he respects their issue and will always strive to fix it.

"I'm the last line of defense. Nine out of 10 times it works," Widman said. "I calm them down and focus on what (they) want to see."

For more information about the South Bay Center for Dispute Resolution, visit www.sbcd.net.

CCCD special trustee Hudley-Hayes dismissed

THE COMPTON BULLETIN

September 14, 2011

Fiscal management expert returns to district to lead accreditation push
Bulletin Staff Writer
By Cheryl Scott

SACRAMENTO—California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott announced on Sept. 9 his appointment of fiscal management expert Thomas Henry as interim special trustee for the Compton Community College District, replacing Genethia Hudley-Hayes, who has been a controversial figure since she was appointed to the post in December 2010.

The announcement cited Henry's previous leadership at the district and successful accreditation track record elsewhere as keys to helping the CCCD regain its independence.

Henry served as special trustee to the CCCD from 2006 to 2007.

"I want to thank Dr. Hudley-Hayes for her service, and I am pleased that Tom Henry has agreed to return to service for the Compton Community College District," Scott said. "His vast experience in fiscal matters and his familiarity with the district will be invaluable as the Compton Center continues to move toward accreditation as an independent college."

Henry recently served as special trustee at Solano Community College, which has been removed from all sanctions by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. He currently serves as the special trustee for Lassen College, which also has been removed from ACCJC sanctions under his leadership. Henry is a former CEO of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, an organization that assists community college and K-12 districts fulfill their financial and management responsibilities.

"I look forward to returning to the Compton district," said Henry, whose appointment is effective immediately. "I know the progress that has been made at the Compton Center working with El Camino College, and I look forward to positioning the Compton district to support the academic programs and student services of the center. I have great respect for the students, faculty, staff and community of Compton and I am confident that, collectively, we can continue to move toward accreditation as an independent college."

The move, while a surprise to many, was not entirely unexpected. On June 17 El Camino President Dr. Thomas Fallo notified Scott that he could not agree with the budget that had been proposed by Hudley-Hayes.

The Compton Center is operated by El Camino Community College District under an agreement between the El Camino Community College District, the Compton Community College District and the California Community College Chancellor's Office. According to the agreement, if

budgetary matters cannot be resolved El Camino would automatically be considered to have given notice of its intent to withdraw from the agreement.

According to the terms of the partnership agreement the chancellor has 90 days from notification to resolve the issue.

The specific aspects of the budget that Fallo refused to approve have not been made public. But in recent weeks two activist organizations have sent lengthy statements to Scott demanding that Hudley-Hayes be removed.

One of the issues mentioned in the most recent demand, a vote of no confidence, was a number of contracts for consultants hired by Hudley-Hayes, while the CCCD recently laid off nine classified employees because of budget issues.

The agreement for the partnership was made possible by AB 318, which was introduced by Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally in 2006, after Compton Community College lost its accreditation. Contrary to a story in The Bulletin last week, the agreement has not expired, but has been changed as needed once the partnership began.

“Circumstances have dictated changes in the agreement from time to time,” said Fallo. “But that was expected as the partnership progressed and we encountered practical matters in the operation of the center.”

Hudley-Hayes angered the Concerned Citizens of Compton and the Committee to Save Compton Community College when she replaced CEO Dr. Lawrence Cox. She has also made a number of incendiary statements that members of both committees considered to be insulting to the college and the community.

On the afternoon of Sept. 7, spurred by rumors that she was being replaced, Hudley Hayes called an open meeting of the faculty, during which she stated that she was “not going anywhere.”

On Sept. 9 Scott announced that she was being replaced by Henry. Sources at the college said the matter was under discussion all week.

The college lost its accreditation after notifying the Chancellor’s Office that it could not make its payroll and was short on its operating funds. The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team conducted a thorough study of every aspect of the operation of the college and found deficiencies in every department, ranging from fiscal mismanagement to employees being paid when they were not on campus.

The team produced a report enumerating the deficiencies. The ACCJC will not accredit the college as a separate entity until all the deficiencies have been rectified.

The ACCJC has laid out a detailed explanation of the steps that have to be taken to gain accreditation, a process that can take as long as 10 years.

Shortly after her appointment, Hudley- Hayes announced that the progress toward accreditation reported by Cox was not supported by an independent audit of CCCD business practices. She bought out Cox's contract at that time.

Cox, who has been unable to comment on the issue, is reportedly filing a lawsuit over his termination.

Greuel to investigate community college hiring

Officials bow to state controller's call for an external inquiry in the selection of Christine Marez as a watchdog for its construction program.

By Gale Holland and Michael Finnegan

Los Angeles Times

September 8, 2011

Yielding to outside pressure, the Los Angeles Community College District has asked City Controller Wendy Greuel to investigate allegations that its selection of a watchdog to police its troubled campus construction program was rigged.

In a recent audit of the \$5.7-billion program, state Controller John Chiang's office cited "possible malfeasance" in the district's hiring of Christine E. Marez as inspector general and urged an independent investigation.

Marez's newly formed company, Policy Masters Inc., was chosen last year over higher-rated applicants, even though she had no experience as an independent auditor or investigator.

From 1998 to 2003, Marez worked for a construction management firm owned by Art Gastelum, a leading campaign donor and fundraiser for the district's elected board members and a major contractor on the construction program.

Chancellor Daniel LaVista, who had recommended Marez's hiring to the board, initially rejected Chiang's call for an outside investigation. But board President Miguel Santiago announced Wednesday that Greuel would conduct an independent review.

Santiago promised to refer any evidence of criminal conduct to the district attorney's office.

Greuel said in an interview that district officials were "taking to heart what the auditor found, and wanted to have an independent look at the process to make sure it was appropriate."

The board also adopted a resolution directing LaVista to take corrective measures recommended by state auditors, including developing a construction master plan and written requirements for evaluating bidders. The resolution also called for an analysis of the district's renewable energy program to determine whether it will produce net savings.

Regarding the inspector general's hiring, state auditors found that an initial selection committee scored Marez's proposal second to last among 11 submitted. The district's bidding rules required that the contract to go to the highest scorer, auditors said. A second selection committee recommended Marez's firm as "far and away the best" applicant.

LaVista maintains that the auditors' findings were based on incorrect information and that Marez was ranked in the top tier in the first round. LaVista said Wednesday that state auditors were returning this week to question him on the issue.

Marez said she welcomed Greuel's review. She also defended her qualifications and called the state audit "seriously flawed in many respects."

"The company I created, Policy Masters, and the staff I have built have all of the requisite skills, experience, talent and commitment to create an exceptional office of inspector general for the district," she said. "And that is what we have done."

A citizen's group, the Van de Kamps Coalition, has asked Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley to open a criminal

inquiry into Marez's hiring. An official in Cooley's public integrity unit said prosecutors had not yet reviewed the request but that Greuel's investigation would not rule out a separate criminal inquiry by the district attorney.

Joseph Lewis announces run for CUSD Board of Trustees

THE COMPTON BULLETIN

September 14, 2011

By Cheryl Scott
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COMPTON—Longtime Hub City resident Joseph Lewis has announced his candidacy for a seat on the Compton Unified School District Board of Trustees. This is the fifth time he is running for trustee.

“I’m running for the board because I have a passion for education,” Lewis told The Bulletin. “It’s so important to have people on the board who understand education. Some of the members do not. And the board lacks leadership.”

Lewis is currently working on his dissertation for a doctorate in education degree from Pepperdine University. He is an alumnus of Allan Hancock Jr. College and an undergraduate of UC Santa Barbara, with degrees in liberal arts, sociology and economics. He holds a Master of Science degree from Springfield College, School of Human Services in Organizational Management and Leadership.

He has served the Compton community in many different capacities. He established a nonprofit organization called Sunrise Youth Service Center Inc. where he facilitated a youth employment program, trained them in parliamentary procedures, Robert’s Rules of Order and developed a youth electoral process that culminated in the city’s first youth commission.

Until recently Lewis served as employment development specialist, and Career Center coordinator at El Camino College Compton Center. As a labor specialist, Lewis also serves as the president of Compton Community College District Classified Union, Local 3486.

He plans to work toward reducing the district’s \$40 million deficit. “The district has financial difficulties because of how money is allocated,” he said. “The budget is dominated by consultants. The district spends more on consultants than it does in the classroom or on the students.”

Lewis also believes that the district does not do enough to improve Academic Progress Indicator scores. “We need improvement on API scores for schools that are under par,” he said. “The district needs to be more transparent about the measures being taken to accomplish this. We need to know what they are doing and why.”

He is concerned about the district’s lack of responsiveness to the community. “I believe in servant leadership elected to serve the community interest,” he said. “Often issues are raised at board meetings and never mentioned again. Recently a contingent of Compton High School students had the wherewithal to appear before the City Council over concerns about crime on

campus and other issues. Those concerns need to be addressed. The students and the community deserve to know what is being done.”

Lewis feels that the district is under the influence of consultants and special interests. “There are so many special interest groups,” he said. “The board and the district are controlled by contractors, vendors, consultants and unions. These interests endorse candidates who, if they are elected are beholden to them. That’s no way to run a school district.”

The district currently allows open requisitions in the budget, allowing money to be held in abeyance for contractors from the previous year, based on that year’s budget, on the assumption that their contracts will be renewed.

“That’s a really bad practice and is evidence of the power held by contractors and consultants. When a contract is over it should not be rolled over into the next year. It should end when it ends. New contracts should be negotiated based on the district’s current needs each year.”

Accreditation is another issue of concern to Lewis. “Our accreditation continues to be at risk,” he said. “It’s a tenuous subject every year. The district should focus its policies on shoring up its accreditation. A \$40 million deficit could cause us to lose it. Our high schools have a 50 percent dropout rate. The board needs to be proactive in making sure it keeps its accreditation.”

Lewis is running for the school board because he believes students should come first in any decisions made by the district.

“We are playing politics with our children,” he said. “That is unacceptable. The kids in our community need as much extra support as possible because we are in a state of cultural transition. There are many negative influences out there and many of our students are also affected by poverty. They deserve the very best we can give them.”

Community Colleges Get Lots of Attention, but a Shrinking Share of Dollars

September 14, 2011

By Eric Kelderman

Community-college leaders have welcomed President Obama's recent proposal to spend \$5-billion on maintenance at the nation's two-year campuses, where the costs of making all needed repairs on buildings are estimated to be 20 times higher. But don't expect anyone to hold their breath for that money.

Federal and state elected officials frequently highlight the importance of community colleges as an affordable option for people looking for advanced job training or a prudent path to a bachelor's degree. And President Obama has made two-year colleges a cornerstone of his plan to create the best-educated nation in the world.

The problem, as this week's release of new data from the Delta Cost Project shows, is that public support for community colleges has not followed the plaudits, putting the mission of those institutions in danger.

Community colleges have historically provided a "safety valve" for higher education, offering access to low-income students and those who need more academic preparation for four-year institutions, said Jane V. Wellman, executive director of the project, formally known as the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity, and Accountability, and a co-author of its annual report, "Trends in College Spending." But that safety valve is starting to close, she said, because of a wicked combination of surging enrollment and severe budget cuts. Getting admitted to a community college is hard enough in this environment, and even then there is no guarantee you'll get the courses you need.

From 1999 to 2009, enrollment at two-year colleges grew by more than 1.5 million students—the vast majority of new students in higher education, according to the Delta Project's latest figures. But community colleges are still spending nearly the same amount of money to educate each full-time student as they were a decade ago, in inflation-adjusted dollars. (Education and related spending per student grew by 11 percent at public research universities during that time, and by 27 percent at private research institutions.)

Other colleges can spend more on educating students largely because they can charge more for tuition, which increased by 50 percent per full-time student from 1999 to 2009 at public research universities

Tuition at community colleges increased by more than a third per full-time student over the same time period, but, on average, it is still less than 40 percent of the tuition at four-year public research universities.

Despite cuts in state appropriations at all levels of public higher education—and the fast enrollment gains at community colleges—flagship universities still receive 33 percent more money per student than community colleges do, according to the Delta data.

"Sadly, we're all too familiar with those trends," said Lawrence A. Nespoli, president of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, an association of the state's 19 two-year campuses.

New Jersey is one of a growing number of states where the combination of budget cuts and tuition increases has shifted the burden of paying for higher education from state and local governments to students. The average community-college student pays for 58 percent of his or her education, compared with 32 percent nationally, according to the Delta figures. New Jersey's public master's-level colleges received, on average, nearly \$5,200 per student in tax support in 2009, more than 50 percent greater than the \$3,400 that community colleges received from state and local governments.

Mr. Nespoli said lawmakers have been constrained by the budget gaps that have forced them to make broad cuts in higher-education spending. "The coffers are bare. There's just no money," he said.

The result is that community colleges in his state have to rely to a greater extent on part-time faculty, and students have to borrow more to cover their education. And although state financial aid has increased somewhat, the income limits for that support prevent many working-class students from receiving that benefit.

Mr. Nespoli said the president's latest proposal for infrastructure money is a positive sign. He appreciates the growing attention given to community colleges, and hopes that focus will still be there when the economy improves.

"People know the importance," he said, "whether they can deliver the dollars or not."

CCCD Special Trustee Henry impressed by improvements at Compton Center

The Compton Bulletin, September 21, 2011

Cites new energy on campus and enrollment, down when he left district in 2008

By Cheryl Scott

Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—Newly appointed Special Trustee Thomas Henry spoke last week to students and staff at the El Camino Community College Center, saying he was elated by “striking differences” he sees on the campus.

“When I left in 2008, student enrollment was so low that most classes only had five or six students in attendance,” he said. “I toured the campus when I first arrived, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that every class I looked into was full.”

He said that while he was eating lunch in the cafeteria, students who spoke to him were enthusiastic about school and welcomed him warmly. “They all said they were happy I am there,” Henry told The Bulletin. “I sensed an overall excitement that was not there when I was here before.”

He also commended the operations and maintenance staff for the condition of the campus. “I can see that they have worked very hard to improve the condition of the campus, from rest rooms to the upkeep of the grounds,” he said. “This is so important because you don’t get a second chance to make a good first impression.”

Henry served as special trustee to the CCCD from 2006 to 2007, replacing Dr. Charles Ratliff shortly after the college lost its accreditation. He was brought back to the Compton Community College District by Chancellor Jack Scott to replace Genethia Hudley-Hayes after El Camino CEO Dr. Thomas Fallo informed the Chancellor’s

Office that he could not approve the proposed budget.

According to the terms of the partnership agreement between the Compton and El Camino Community College districts and the Department of Education, if El Camino’s CEO and the Compton district cannot agree on a budget, El Camino will withdraw from the partnership.

“When Dr. Fallo gave notice that El Camino would leave the partnership, the chancellor took action to remove Dr. Hudley-Hayes and I’ve been appointed interim special trustee,” Henry said.

At issue for the last several weeks had been consultants hired by Hudley-Hayes, despite the fact that there have been layoffs because of state budget cuts to community colleges. The Committee

to Save Compton Community College District and the Concerned Citizens of Compton had sent several requests to the Chancellor's Office to remove her from the position.

"There were apparently a number of issues regarding Dr. Hudley-Hayes and her relationship with the community," Henry said. "But make no mistake about it. The reason the chancellor took the action he did was because El Camino had given notice of its intent to leave the partnership. The consequences of that would have been devastating. We could not allow that to happen."

If El Camino were to withdraw from the partnership, it would be required to continue until another partner could be found. However, it would be able to hold classes at its campus in Torrance and Compton students would have to drop out if they could not get to that campus.

"The entire purpose of AB 318 and the partnership between the two districts was to keep a college open in the city of Compton," Henry said. "At the time we sent out a request for proposals to community college districts throughout the state trying to find a partner. El Camino was the only one who replied. If a new partner were needed, there is no guarantee that one could be found and there's no guarantee that if we could find one it would be approved by the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges)."

Henry emphasized that the first priority remains to be keeping a college open in the city. "The second is to gain accreditation, but we can't sacrifice the first in favor of the second."

Since the reason El Camino intended to leave the partnership was the budget proposed by Hudley-Hayes, the implication is that the budget has been amended and that questionable items have been removed.

If hiring expensive consultants when employees have been laid off caused a budget that could not be approved by El Camino, there is now a question of whether the layoffs will be reversed.

"I don't know the answer to that," Henry said. "There have been serious cash flow concerns in the district, but there are serious budget cuts that may be coming our way in a few months when the state budget is finalized. So we will have to make decisions based on the funding we will get from the state."

He is optimistic about the accreditation effort going forward. "Everyone has been working diligently to fulfill all of ACCJC's requirements," he said. "But accreditation is a lengthy and complex procedure. It will take time."

Henry recently served as special trustee at Solano Community College, which has been removed from all sanctions by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

He currently serves as the special trustee for Lassen College, which also has been removed from ACCJC sanctions under his leadership. Henry is a former CEO of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, an organization that assists community college and K-12 districts fulfill their financial and management responsibilities.

EL Camino College Compton Center offers foster youth program

The Compton Bulletin, September 21, 2011

From staff reports

COMPTON—El Camino College Compton Center is one of nine educational institutions in Los Angeles County offering The Foundation for California Community Colleges' Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success (YESS) program. The YESS program is designed to provide foster youth ages 16-21 with academic and lifeskills training so that they may successfully transition into adult life.

An upcoming orientation for the YESS program will take place on Sept. 20 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Foster Care Building at El Camino College Compton Center, 1111 E. Artesia Blvd. All attendees will receive a complimentary dinner and school supplies.

The YESS Program is open to foster care youth between the ages of 16 and 21 residing in the cities of Compton, Lynwood, Paramount, North Long Beach and Carson. Registration is required.

Foster youth who enroll in the 14-week program are introduced to college and community resources that will support their success. Students will earn high school and college credits, and will learn about scholarships and financial aid information. If students enroll in 12 or more units they may be offered a job at ECC Compton Center, which is an incentive for them to continue their education.

YESS also offers interactive and hands-on training in basic life skills. Students build confidence by participating in experiential activities related to housing, money management, employment counseling and exploration, job skills, daily living skills and parenting.

The short-term goal is to give foster youth the tools they need to overcome hurdles they may face at different points along their path. The program's long-term goal is for participants to graduate from high school, begin earning a college degree or technical certificate and become self-sufficient and gainfully employed.

In Los Angeles alone, nearly 2,000 foster youth are emancipated each year. Without academic or life-skills support, as many as 50 percent of them become homeless, have serious money problems or end up incarcerated. The YESS program aims to prevent those problems by better preparing foster youth for independence.

For more information about the YESS program at El Camino College Compton Center, call 310-900-1600, Ext. 2767.

For more information visit:

<http://www.foundationccc.org/WhatWeDo/YESS/tabid/602/Default.aspx>

El Camino College Compton Center's Transfer Center helps students to focus on future

The Compton Bulletin, September 21, 2011

From staff reports

COMPTON—The beginning of the school year is an ideal time for students to familiarize themselves with El Camino College Compton Center's Transfer Center. There are a variety of services, programs and activities offered that are designed to help students put a successful transfer plan into action. ECC Compton Center provides students with an affordable start on a four-year degree, and its Transfer Center is the ultimate resource for making a smooth transition to any college or university.

Throughout the year, the Transfer Center invites students to identify and become experts in their individual transfer goals:

Transfer-related Informational Workshops walk students through the transfer process, university academic programs, how to fill out applications and tips on writing a personal statement.

University Representatives from UC, CSU and private and out-of-state colleges visit El Camino College Compton Center regularly to answer students' questions about admissions, majors, financial aid and more.

University and college fairs are offered throughout the year and give students an opportunity to learn about many different schools in one convenient location.

University Tours are a great way to see campuses in-person and learn more in-depth information about a school. The Transfer Center offers about a dozen tours, free of charge, every year.

University Catalogue and Reference Library allows students to explore up-to-date information from nationwide accredited institutions on programs and admissions requirements, as well as transfer criteria.

Transfer websites and Internet resource are available to support the transfer process.

University Admissions panels present requirements for admission to California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), as well as independent and private schools.

Counseling and advising is always available to help students develop individual transfer plans.

“The Transfer Center helped me with everything from instructing me on what classes to take to encouraging me to go on university tours to check out school campuses, as well as advising me on the whole process of filling out college applications,” said Alan Gonzalez, El Camino College

Compton Center student and former Transfer Club president, who hopes to transfer to the University of California, Merced next year and eventually pursue a career as a lawyer.

For more information, visit the Transfer Center in Room D-29 or call 310-900-1600, Ext. 2764. The Transfer Center is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Is Compton Community College out of control?

Los Angeles Sentinel

Written by Yussuf J. Simmonds (Managing Editor), on 09-22-2011 01:27



[Dr Genethia Hudley-Hayes](#)

According to Dr. Hayes, who was recently removed as special trustee of El Camino Compton Center (Compton Community College), "I began asking too many questions."

On Friday, September 9, Dr. Genethia Hudley-Hayes was removed as special trustee of the El Camino Compton Center (ECCC) better known as Compton Community College (CCC). According to a statement from California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott, who had appointed Dr. Hayes a little over eight months ago - a statement that read 'FISCAL MANAGEMENT EXPERT RETURNS TO DISTRICT TO LEAD ACCREDITATION PUSH' - "I want to thank Dr. Hudley-Hayes for her service, and I am pleased that Tom Henry has agreed to return to service for the Compton Community College District," Chancellor Scott said. "His vast experience in fiscal matters and his familiarity with the district will be invaluable as the Compton Center continues

to move toward accreditation as an independent college." Thomas Henry had previously served as special trustee of the ECCC from 2006 to 2007.

If the district needed a fiscal management expert, as Dr. Scott alluded to, then there must have been fiscal (mis)management problems; and those problems - and others - pre-dated the arrival of Dr. Hayes. It was the fiscal irregularities and fiscal (mis)management running rampant at the college that triggered Chancellor Scott to appoint Dr. Hayes almost nine months ago, in the first place - notwithstanding also, the loss of accreditation. If everything was in ship-shape at the college, there would not have been the need for a special trustee or a management expert. In addition, nine months was hardly enough time to ascertain the scope or the core of the mismanagement problem.

In order to understand what has happened or is happening at ECCC, it is important to delve a bit into the past. Around 2005/2006 when it was still officially called Compton Community College (CCC), the school lost its accreditation. Added to that, a year or so later, the college was on the verge of being closed when Dr. Mervyn Dymally (then an assemblyman) authored AB 318 and with the help of Chancellor Scott (then a state senator), they got the bill through and the governor signed it thereby loaning CCC \$30 million. The result: the college continued operating.

However, CCC was still without accreditation and needed a supervisory (parent) educational institution to assist and "manage" it until it was able to regain its accreditation and be independent once again. Enter El Camino College, an institution that offered to assist CCC to "get back on its feet." CCC was then officially named El Camino Compton Center. The duration was supposed to be approximately five years for the return to full accreditation. Meanwhile, there were several special trustees and college presidents appointed, time went by, the \$30 million were being utilized, but a return to independence and full accreditation seemed elusive.

Former State Senator Jack Scott became Chancellor Jack Scott and in January 2011, he appointed Dr. Genethia Hudley-Hayes as the special trustee at ECCC. It was evident that the chancellor was dissatisfied with what was going on at the college or he would not have appointed a new trustee. Dr. Hayes began instituting changes. She dismissed Dr. Lawrence Cox the college CEO and brought in a replacement.

(Here, it must be understood that whenever, a new executive or administrator comes into an institution, he or she has the prerogative to bring in his or her

own staff, and that is basic administrative procedure - administration 101. And Dr. Hayes did just that.).

A group of Compton residents, were totally dissatisfied with the removal of Dr. Cox - and other actions taken by Dr. Hayes and wrote a six-page letter to Governor Brown and Chancellor Scott asking for her removal. One of their complaints against Dr. Hayes and on behalf of Dr. Cox was that he was popular with the Compton College community. Though it is desirable to be popular with those that 'you' serve, popularity is no substitute for competence, efficiency or effectiveness in carrying out one's duties. And in all the complaints that have been received against Dr. Hayes, that she was incompetent is not one of them.

When Dr. Hayes gave a 'State of the District' address, she invited Compton community, representatives from the educational community, both colleges and elected officials. In attendance were Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chancellor Jack Scott, Dr. Ramon Cortines (LAUSD Supt.), Dr. Mervyn Dymally (former assemblyman and author of AB318), Dr. Willie Jones and Barbara Calhoun, Compton city council members) Dr. Keith Curry (interim CEO of ECCC), Dr. Thomas Fallo (president of El Camino college) and the board of trustees of both ECCC and El Camino college. They all seemed supportive of her at that time.

Recently, Dr. Hayes said that she began asking questions about financial irregularities, and eventually hired an accounting firm to do an audit.

Meanwhile, she also had to hire the services of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to escort her to and from her residence and the college because she had received threats and her office had been broken into on several occasions.

Then Dr. Hayes was removed from her appointment after merely eight months and though her appointment was at the chancellor's discretion, an arbitrary removal seemed out of place, especially when she was doing the job that she had been appointed to do in a competent manner by the said chancellor.

In a letter to Chancellor Scott, Dr. Dymally outlined the situation in very concise terms, and he mentioned appropriately that he had not received "the courtesy of a phone call, or even an e-mail," which seemed strange since both he and Scott were responsible for AB 318 that kept ECCC 'in business.' But also seemed clear that the letter also stated: "You waited until the day of

adjournment of the legislature to send out a press release terminating the services of Dr. Genethia Hudley-Hayes, special trustee of the Compton Community College District."

Furthermore, Dr. Dymally stated on the record that Dr. Hayes was asking for an accounting of the following:

One Hundred Million Bond Fund
Thirty Million (30) (AB318) Loan to the District
The Four (4) Million Dollar Partnership Fee
Other Expenditure

He then went on to say, "Here was one honest woman up against four men".

The State Chancellor, The President of El Camino College, The President of the Academic Senate, The Consultant to the Chancellor and President of El Camino.

Dr. Dymally is calling for an investigation by: The Attorney General, State Controller and District Attorney.

The Los Angeles Sentinel has reached out to all the elected officials in whose district Compton is located, to Dr. Fallo and has interviewed Dr. Hayes. Many of the elected officials who responded were very concerned about the termination of Dr. Hayes and the financial mismanagement that seemed to be running rampant at ECCC.

A call to Dr. Fallo did not generate a verbal response however, his assistant did e-mail the following: "El Camino College's focus remains on student success and continuing our progress to attain the goal of an accredited college in the Compton District."

MORE TO COME NEXT WEEK INCLUDING COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS AND FROM DR. HAYES' INTERVIEW.

<http://www.lasentinel.net/Is-Compton-Community-College-out-of-control.html>

Community college review finds contract-award 'irregularities'

LOS ANGELES TIMES

SEPTEMBER 23, 2011

An internal review questions the awarding of two major building contracts, with an Irvine firm winning \$104 million in work after a rival first scored higher in bid evaluations.

By Gale Holland and Michael Finnegan, Los Angeles Times

An internal review has found "irregularities" in the awarding of two major construction contracts at Los Angeles community colleges, with an Irvine company winning \$104 million in work after a rival scored higher in initial bid evaluations.

Twin reports by the inspector general of the Los Angeles Community College District questioned the awarding of two contracts to FTR International Inc. One was a \$75-million contract to design and build a performing arts, classroom and office complex at West Los Angeles College in Culver City. The other was a \$29-million contract for an office building at Mission College in Sylmar.

In initial reviews by campus selection committees, FTR's proposals received lower scores than those of Hensel Phelps Construction Co. of Colorado, according to the inspector general's reports, released Wednesday evening.

In both cases, college officials or construction consultants then expressed enthusiastic support for FTR's proposals and invited committee members to adjust their scores, the reports said.

After new tallies were taken, FTR finished just ahead of Hensel Phelps in each case, and the district's elected board of trustees awarded both contracts to FTR.

The investigation by inspector general Christine E. Marez was sparked in part by inquiries from The Times about the Mission and West L.A. contracts.

Marez urged the district to "ensure accountability and integrity" in the bidding process by banning rescoring, requiring conflict-of-interest disclosures by selection committee members, and strengthening rules and documentation on bid evaluations.

The inspector general said she found no "incontrovertible evidence" of collusion between FTR and those involved in awarding the contracts.

However, one of her reports called for an independent investigation into "possible collusion" between FTR, Gateway Science & Engineering of Pasadena and unnamed others who worked for the college system.

Gateway is a construction management firm that supervises building projects at Mission College

for the district. A Gateway official served on the selection committee for the \$29-million contract at Mission. At the time, Gateway was a subcontractor to FTR on the West L.A. project, Marez reported.

"This relationship may represent a possible conflict of interest," one of the reports said.

Board President Miguel Santiago called the reports "unsettling and troubling" and said he had directed the district's general counsel and chancellor to develop proposals for the "toughest action" possible.

In a statement, FTR said it was "the lowest responsible bidder on both public projects.... We believe we were awarded the contracts fairly. FTR was not part of the selection committee's internal process."

Gateway owner Art Gastelum denied any improper relationship with FTR and said bid rescoring was common on campus building projects.

He said FTR's bid on the Mission College contract was \$1 million less than its competitor's, and that the rescoring was aimed at saving the district money.

"There is no rule that says you cannot revisit the score if you can save money," Gastelum said.

The inspector general's reports make no mention of cost savings as a factor in the rescoring.

Both the Mission and West L.A. projects were so-called design-build contracts, which, unlike traditional public construction jobs, do not have to go to the lowest bidder. State law allows public agencies to weigh not just price, but also design aesthetics, a contractor's track record and other factors.

The seven-member committee that evaluated proposals for the Mission College office building, known as the Student Services Center, included Karen Hoefel, then Mission's vice president for administrative services.

When Hensel Phelps emerged as the highest scorer, Hoefel "reminded the other selection committee members" that FTR's design "better supported the operations of the college," Marez reported. Committee members, including two college officials who reported to Hoefel, then adjusted their scores, the inspector general said.

On her own evaluation sheet, Hoefel increased FTR's score by 12 points and lowered Hensel Phelps' by 35, "effectively increasing the tally in favor of FTR by 47 points," one of the reports said. On a scale of 1 to 100, FTR finished first in the rescoring by a margin of 0.03 points, Marez found.

For the West L.A. College project, the five-member selection committee included James Sohn, then a vice president of URS Corp. who was leading day-to-day management of the district's construction program. Sohn "was quite vocal in communicating his preference for the FTR

design," the inspector general found.

When Hensel Phelps won the highest score, unnamed construction consultants stated that "this was not going to work" and "we need to rescore," Marez reported.

Sohn was one of the committee members who changed his scores, helping FTR edge past Hensel Phelps, the report said.

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Library Limbo

Inside Higher Ed

September 27, 2011

The layoffs of eight library staff members — some with decades of experience and only a couple of years away from retirement — have faculty members at the University of San Diego up in arms. Critics call the administration's actions an affront to the Roman Catholic teachings of the university.

Administrators said a reorganization of the university's Copley Library was necessary in an increasingly technological world, and eliminating some positions made way for the creation of new positions that ensure the library will stay on top of current, digital trends. Those who lost their jobs devoted many years to the university; four are over the age of 58 and two have worked at the library for more than 25 years. But their jobs include positions such as inventory control official, night supervisor and reserves manager -- positions that the library doesn't see as essential in a digital age. At the very least, faculty critics say, the library workers should have been retrained for new positions.

Faculty members have been studying the layoffs since they were announced in July and recently released a report outlining their concerns. Jerome Hall, Academic Assembly chair, said the faculty had to act after the layoff decisions were made in secret and with no regard to the livelihoods of those losing their jobs.

"The overall ethos of the community is one of fear," Hall, associate professor of anthropology, said. "We feel it is incumbent on those of us who have the benefit of tenure to speak up for those who can't.... A business ethos is overpowering the university. If you are going to make a stand on something, a university mission statement is not a bad place to place your flag."

Hall said one of the core values in the university's mission statement is to uphold the "Catholic moral and social tradition by its commitment to serve with compassion, to foster peace, and to work for justice."

The university is "marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual. The university values students, faculty and staff from different backgrounds and faith traditions, and is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas," according to the statement.

The administration, including Mary Lyons, the president, and Theresa Byrd, university librarian, have said the reorganization of the university's Copley Library was necessary to keep the library on track with the ongoing progression of technology. Lyons, in an August letter to Hall and other members of the academic assembly, said that to involve

faculty debate in a staff personnel matter would have violated the privacy rights of those involved.

“I can tell you that as in prior layoffs at the university, painstaking efforts were made to analyze how it should be done,” Lyons wrote. “It was difficult for those impacted, but it was also difficult for those who had to make the decisions.”

University administrators did not respond to requests for further comment as of press time.

The eight library staff members were all offered severance packages and career placement services, Lyons wrote. One of the eight library staff members has since been rehired.

At a forum on the layoffs last week, the Rev. Ron Pachence, a professor of theology and religious studies at the university, gave what many are calling a homily about the issues raised by the layoffs. “It doesn’t strike us to meet our mission and our culture to just throw people out on the street,” Father Pachence said.

He added that “the way it was done looks more like the practice of corporate America than it does the practice of a Catholic university.”

By laying staff members off, rather than giving them the chance to receive training in new and emerging technologies, administrators have effectively said decades of hard work are a moot point, he said.

In her letter, Lyons wrote that she simply disagreed with the assertion that these layoffs were an affront to Catholic social teaching.

“Preserving the dignity of workers and ensuring their humane treatment are indeed values to which we aspire and practice,” she wrote. “I do not find anything within the canon of that teaching which prohibits employee termination. While we prefer to avoid doing so when possible, it is sometimes necessary and regularly occurs at Catholic institutions.”

— Elizabeth Murphy

jjjjj

How to Boost Spending on Community Colleges

The Chronicle of Higher Education

September 21, 2011, 3:08 pm

By Richard Kahlenberg

President Obama has put community colleges at the center of the effort to raise U.S. student attainment rates, yet a new report from the Delta Cost Project suggests financial support for the two-year sector is in decline. The gross mismatch between the grand expectations for community colleges and the declining resources calls for creative thinking about how to boost funding for—and results from—two-year institutions.

According to the report, “Trends in College Spending 1999-2009,” community colleges are spending about the same amount of money educating students as a decade ago, even as per-pupil spending increased by 11 percent at public research universities and 27 percent at private research universities. In 2009, community colleges actually saw a 2.5-percent decline in per student spending.

Of course, community colleges spend less per student than four-year colleges in part because less tuition is charged, but the average public subsidy is also lower at community colleges, the Delta Project finds. As a result, the students with the greatest needs and greatest challenges receive the least amount of public funding.

Compare this situation to K-12 schooling. Fairness in primary and secondary school spending has not been fully achieved, but according to a new report from Third Way, featured in the Wall Street Journal, Americans do put more federal, state, and local resources on average into low-income school districts than middle-class districts (though both spend less than school districts with affluent student bodies). In 2008, middle-class school districts spent \$10,349 per student, compared with \$11,799 per student in low-income school districts (and \$11,925 in upper-income districts.)

While inequities remain at the K-12 level, advocates of greater funding for low-income students have pursued a number of equity strategies, some to substantial effect. The first was federal aid to education through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is progressively distributed based on the proportion of students who are low-income. A second strategy involved state-level litigation, in which lawsuits were brought in dozens of states to provide either “adequate” or “equitable” funding. Many of these suits were successful, and in New Jersey, litigation has actually compelled the state to spend considerably more on low-income districts than on middle-class districts. A third effort involved school desegregation; in many minority schools that saw an influx of white students, greater funding followed. The slogan was: “green follows white.”

At the higher-education level, President Obama's recent \$5-billion proposal to maintain and upgrade facilities in community colleges is a very important idea, smartly marrying the need to bolster community colleges with the desire to create construction jobs at a time of high unemployment. But the prospects in Congress are unclear at best, and the proposal may face the fate of the administration's American Graduation Initiative, which saw a \$12-billion proposal for community colleges cut to \$2-billion.

To attract greater resources in the future, community colleges may want to borrow from the integration model employed in K-12 schooling. As I've noted elsewhere, over the long haul, community colleges have seen a decline in the proportion of white and upper-middle class students, which may be weakening the political and financial support provided to the two-year sector. Cuts in community-college funding may spawn further middle-class flight, continuing a downward spiral.

Conscious efforts to win back middle- and upper-middle class students could, by contrast, create a virtuous cycle of greater political capital and stronger financial support from state and local governments. In addition, a return of upper-middle class students, who, on average, are more likely to graduate, could foster positive peer influences on all students in community colleges. Middle-class students might be attracted by community-college honors programs, early college programs, or opportunities to gain a bachelor's degree in a community-college setting.

Bringing in more middle-class students might be seen as squeezing out more deserving low-income students in the short term, but ultimately, a community-college sector which educates students from all kinds of backgrounds will be stronger and benefit everyone who attends. The new data on declining revenues make clear that community colleges need to be open to a variety of new approaches if they want to succeed with the new challenges being laid at their doorsteps.

Fix for-profit colleges

The Daily Breeze

Posted: 09/24/2011

Americans are beginning to catch on to the fact that low-skill jobs no longer will provide a middle-class life. It's college or else.

But that's not the only answer either, as English majors and new Ph.D.s are learning in our stagnant economy.

Education and training must be relevant to the job market, which is strong for those with the right skills, and weak for those without.

Even jobs that traditionally required little training have evolved into highly technical fields that pay well but often require preparation at the college level. Auto technicians (no longer "mechanics") can command salaries of up to six figures, but only if they can master the computerized systems that cars and repair facilities rely on.

President Barack Obama has said that every young American needs to not just finish high school, but ALSO continue for a degree or certificate suitable to the marketplace. And 70 percent of students are entering college, although fewer than half actually graduate, and most who drop out are far from prepared for the kind of job search ahead of them.

Obama's idea of a solution, which will not work, is to propose spending billions on community colleges. Among the nation's 1,200 community colleges are some very good ones, like El Camino, Long Beach City, Santa Monica and many others. But there also are entities like the L.A. Community College District, a disastrously managed and politically corrupt morass that is the last place taxpayers should put more money.

Also, even the best-managed community colleges are poorly suited to low-income students who work at least part time and need to attend classes either at night or online. Private, for-profit schools provide those opportunities, and in that respect are a much better choice.

But, as we've said before, many of the for-profits themselves are in a corrupt relationship with government, siphoning off up to 90 percent of their revenue from grants and loans, then leaving the bills to taxpayers when almost half of those students default. There is a double penalty, because well-run public universities like California State University, Dominguez Hills and Cal State Long Beach, which enroll high percentages of low-income students, get shortchanged on government aid.

The Justice Department has gone after some of the for-profits, and it would be tempting to simply put them out of business, at least as far as taxpayers are concerned. But that would be a bad mistake.

There is a fairly simple solution, if politicians whose palms are greased by the for-profits are willing to take some action. Force the for-profits to screen their student applicants for college readiness, and assume some of the losses when students default. As the respected business writer Joe Nocera pointed out recently in *The New York Times*, both the for-profits and the nonprofits have serious flaws.

But we need them both.

Governor signs bill delaying community college fee hike

The Daily Breeze

From staff reports

Posted: 09/26/2011

Governor signs bill delaying community college fee hike: Gov. Jerry Brown has signed a bill that postpones a planned fee increase for students at California's community colleges until summer.

The hike from \$36 to \$46 per unit was initially slated for spring 2012.

Assembly Bill X1 32, authored by Bob Blumenfield, D-Van Nuys, calls for the \$10 fee increase to take effect in the summer if tax revenues fall short of projections by at least \$1 billion. Brown signed the bill last week.

California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott praised Brown in a statement Wednesday.

"Without this legislation, colleges would have been forced to raise fees on very short notice and collect increased fees from students who had already registered for spring classes," he said.

Brown also signed a bill authored by Assemblyman Steve Knight, R-Lancaster, requiring community colleges to refund tuition to members of the National Guard called to active duty.

Compton Center's First Year Experience Program provides students supportive environment

The Compton Bulletin, September 28, 2011

COMPTON—Like many Californians, Maria Rojas was struggling to find work. Rojas' cousin, who is an El Camino College Compton Center alumna, encouraged her to consider going to college.

After some initial trepidation, Rojas attended a registration assistance session where she was introduced to the First Year Experience program.

Rojas, a mother of four who had always struggled with staying in school, was a perfect candidate for this program and decided to enroll.

The FYE program is designed to help students be successful in their first year of college by providing a learning community that includes educational and career services.

“Before the FYE program my approach to life was that whatever is going to happen is going to happen and there's not much you can do about it,” said Rojas. “Now I know that whatever effort I put forth matters. This next year my goal is to keep up my GPA and get straight A's.”

This new outlook represents a transformation that occurred in Rojas as a result of FYE. In 1993, just a couple months shy of graduating from Narbonne High School, Rojas dropped out.

Years later, in 2004, her coworkers at an alcohol and drug treatment center motivated her to go back to school and earn her high school diploma. It took less than a year, but after completing the process she decided to take some time off to raise her four children instead of continuing on to college. Another six years would pass before she enrolled as a student at ECC Compton Center in 2010.

Looking back on the 2010-2011 academic year, Rojas said, “I became really close with all of the FYE students. We were all different ages and came from different backgrounds, but together we made such a great group. At one point, I remember wishing that all of my loved ones could have this same experience.”

One of the classes responsible for bringing the 2010- 2011 FYE students together was Human Development, taught by FYE Program Director Rebecca Mason. In addition to helping the students pinpoint their likes and dislikes in order to choose a major, Mason said the idea is that students need to become the creators of their own destiny.

Another focus of the program is to encourage the students to apply for scholarships. All of the recommendations and hard work paid off for Rojas, who was the recipient of the Behavioral Sciences Scholarship and the Robert Spieker Scholarship.

Rojas is looking forward to excelling in her classes this coming year and preparing to transfer.

She would like to go to California State University Dominguez Hills or California State University Long Beach to study history.

“I want to be a history teacher because I am inspired by my father’s love of history,” she said.
“He’s the type of person who will give you a history lesson anytime you ask him a question.”