



EL CAMINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

16007 Crenshaw Boulevard Torrance, California 90506-0001
Telephone (310) 532-3670 or 1-866-ELCAMINO

February 14, 2008

Board of Trustees
El Camino Community College District

Dear Members of the Board:

Enrollment continues to climb towards our target FTES of 7,883 for spring 2008. As of Wednesday, February 13, 2008, our FTES was 7,576 (96.1% of target). With adds and drops continuing through Friday, February 22, we anticipate achieving our target for the spring semester.

The agenda for our next Board meeting, to be held on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at 4 p.m., includes routine start-of-semester approvals for curriculum changes, student activities, and necessary personnel actions. The Administrative Services section includes an informational item showing the 2008-2009 Budget Assumptions. The Planning and Budget Committee adopted the 2008-09 Budget Assumptions at their last meeting. The preliminary budget will be built upon these assumptions until more concrete information is available from the State.

The Transfer Agreement merging the Compton Community College District police officers with the El Camino College police department is being finalized and will be brought to the March 10, 2008 Board meeting for your approval. The terms of the agreement include the yearly cost to be charged, the level of service requested and limits of liability exposure for both Districts. It also provides for an initial three-year contract with continuing options for renewal up to the time when the Compton Community College District establishes its own Police Department.

The Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) visited the Compton Community College District from October 28 through November 14. Five teams provided the comprehensive evaluation for the areas of Academic Achievement, Community Relations & Governance, Fiscal, Facilities and Personnel Management. Included with your packets, and also posted on the El Camino College site, is the Comprehensive Assessment First Six-Month Progress Report, January 2008.

The Board asked for additional information regarding the determination of California Residency. Students are determined to be California residents if they have been in residence in California for at least two years (the intent rule) as of the residence

determination date. However, they may be precluded from residence due to visa status (F-1) or undocumented status. Further, answering the application for admissions in a manner that would contradict other portions of the application may also result in an indeterminate residency. Those persons who are in residence for less than two years, but more than a year as of the residency determination date, may qualify for California residence subject to verification as prescribed by law.

Please note memo from Rocky Bonura responding to purchase order inquiries at the last Board meeting.

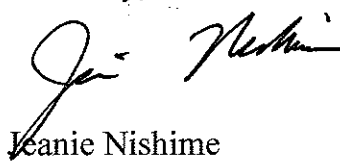
Other items of interest include:

1. Memo from Francisco Arce, January 16, 2008, summarizing sabbatical projects for 2008-2009;
2. The 2008 Community College League of California Trustee Handbook is available in the President's office and at www.ccleague.org;
3. Letter from Dr. Barbara Beno, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 9, 2008, confirming Accrediting team's visit on October 6-9, 2008;
4. Letter from Dr. Barbara Beno, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 31, 2008, stating the Progress Report and Report of the November 20, 2007, evaluation team, have been accepted;
5. President's Newsletter, January 18, 2008;
6. "A Home for the ECC Humanities," *The Daily Breeze*, January 30, 2008;
7. Memo from Los Angeles County School Trustees Association, January 9, 2008, calling for nominees to serve on its Executive Board of Directors;
8. Memo from Barbara Jaffee, Associate Dean, Humanities, announcing the Townsend Developmental College Teaching award received by Inna Newberry;
9. "Major League Baseball Sets First Urban Invitational," January 30, 2008;
10. "Torrance Weighs Presenting 2 Bonds to Voters," *The Daily Breeze*, January 26, 2008;
11. "Redondo Appeals to School Pride," *The Daily Breeze*, January 20, 2008;
12. "South Bay Cities Pay Lobbyists to Get Funds Flowing," *The Daily Breeze*, February 3, 2008;

13. "Local Hospitals Cope With a Critical Nursing Shortage," *The Daily Breeze*, February 3, 2008;
14. "Daniel Weintraub: Proposition 92 Would Tie More Knots in State Budget," *Sacramento Bee*, January 31, 2008;
15. "College Panned for Hiring Out-of-State Architect," *Newsday.com*, February 1, 2008;
16. "Chevron Finishes 1st Solar Project Phase," *CNNMoney.com*, January 31, 2008;
17. "Keeping Needy Students in College Hinges More on Academic Success Than Financial Aid, Study Finds," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 21, 2008;
18. "Despite Fading Economy, 2008 Outlook for Colleges Is Stable, Analysts Say," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 25, 2008;
19. "Colleges Brace for Cuts as State Economies Take a Turn for the Worse," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 25, 2008;
20. "College Emerge the Clear Winner in the Battle Over Accreditation," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 1, 2008;
21. "CSU Told 'Civility' Demand is Too Vague," *SignonSanDiego.com*, January 21, 2008;
22. "Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities," A Resources for Community College Trustees, from the Community College League of California;
23. California Teacher, December-January 2008.

President Fallo will be in his office on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, prior to the 4 p.m. meeting. In the meantime, please feel free to call Kathy or me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,



Jeanie Nishime
Vice President-Student Services

JN/kao

Cc: Vice Presidents, Provost, Director of Community Relations


RECEIVED

JAN 28 2008



Business Services Division
Inter-Office Memorandum

Date: January 28, 2008

To: Dr. Fallo
From: Rocky Bonura 
Subject: Purchase Order Inquiries – January Board

The following is a brief summary of the inquiries requested today from your office:

PO 102225 Premier – This PO represents payment of \$13,450 for Student School Planners ordered by the Counseling Division.

PO 102436 El Camino College Foundation – Payment for one table for the 2nd Annual SSTARS Breakfast Fundraiser held at the Double Tree Hotel in Torrance at the request of Mr. John Means.

PO 102459 South Bay Municipal Court – Payment for “Court Construction Fee” to reimburse the South Bay Municipal Court for parking citations paid at the ECC Campus Police during the month of October 2007 at approximately \$5.00 per paid citation with 2,406 citations during that month. Requested by Chief Stephen Port.

Cc: Dr. Marsee



EL CAMINO COLLEGE

Office of the Vice President-Academic Affairs
16 January 2008

RECEIVED

JAN 17 2008

TO: President Thomas Fallo
FROM: Francisco M. Arce *FMA*
SUBJECT: Summary of Sabbatical Leave Projects

The Sabbatical Leave Committee is pleased to forward the following leaves of absence for 2008/2009:

One-Semester Sabbatical (one semester at full pay)

Florence Baker – History (Fall 2008)

Type of Sabbatical: program of independent study in the applicant's teaching field other than formal class work

Project: Dr. Baker plans to continue her research of parks and gardens of East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. She will examine the political functions of gardens and will also look at parks and gardens for evidence of cross cultural exchanges to gain a greater understanding of cross cultural encounters and their impact on cultural development in the various societies in which they occurred.

Evelyne Berman – French (Spring 2009)

Type of Sabbatical: foreign language instructor's extended visit to the country in which the language the instructor normally teaches is universally used

Project: Dr. Berman will spend an extended period of time in one or more francophone countries among the following: France, Switzerland, Belgium or Canada. She will update her language skills, increase her technical vocabulary and acquire new idioms recently created in French.

Jill Evensizer – Mathematics (Fall 2008)

Type of Sabbatical: program of independent study in the applicant's teaching field other than formal class work

Professor Evensizer plans to work with the South Bay Studio of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic to learn how they produce audio textbooks for students with visual and learning disabilities. She will put particular emphasis in observing how non-text items (e.g. equations, graphs, maps, charts, diagrams, photos) are described verbally.

Donna Factor – Spanish (Spring 2009)

Type of Sabbatical: foreign language instructor's extended visit to the country in which the language the instructor normally teaches is universally used

Project: Dr. Factor will visit Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and will develop a

methodology for teaching Spanish through music from Spain, Latin America and the Caribbean.

William Hoanzl – Educational Development; Learning Disabilities Specialist (Spring 2009)

Type of Sabbatical: program of independent study in the applicant's teaching field other than formal class work

Project: Professor Hoanzl plans to investigate existing research in the area of how students learn, stressing modes and preferences of student learning. More importantly, practical "tools" and techniques that are applicable in evaluating student learning styles will be sought. These data will be synthesized to develop additional teaching strategies that faculty, especially those teaching basic skills classes, might use as strategies to adapt to the learning styles of our students.

Joanna Nachev – Music (Spring 2009)

Type of Sabbatical: program of independent study for Instructors in fine arts

Project: Dr. Nachev's project will focus on compiling, arranging and publishing Sacred and Secular Arabic Choral Music.

Darilyn Rowan – Photography (Fall 2008)

Type of Sabbatical: program of independent study in the applicant's teaching field other than formal class work

Project: Professor Rowan plans to work at an art auction house to gain direct experience in the acquisition, appraisal and sale of fine arts property through the auction process.

Rosemary Swade – Speech Communication (Spring 2009)

Type of Sabbatical: writing of a textbook

Project: Professor Swade plans to re-write and update three of her published workbooks, which will include modernizing, reorganizing and adding new data.



RECEIVED

FEB 11 2008

February 4, 2008

TO: Chancellors and Superintendent/Presidents

FROM: Carmen Sandoval, Director, Education Services

Enclosed is the 2008 edition of the *Trustee Handbook*, developed for and distributed at the Effective Trusteeship Workshop held January 25-27 in Sacramento.

The workshop participants also received the publication, *Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities* which can be ordered on the League's website at www.ccleague.org. Also included were *The ABCs of Open Government Laws* and *Key Ethics Law Principles for Public Servants* which can be ordered from League of California Cities or online at www.cacities. The *Handbook*, along with the other resources previously mentioned, will also be mailed to those newly-elected and appointed trustees who could not attend the event and sent to new trustees taking office throughout the coming year.

We hope you will use the *Handbook* for your local trustee education programs. The format was designed so that individual chapters could be copied and used as background for discussions with trustees on specific topics. Please feel free to copy any or all sections for distribution to your trustees. In addition, other educational materials for trustees and chief executives are posted and listed on The League's website, www.ccleague.org.

Enclosure



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

10 COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD
SUITE 204
NOVATO, CA 94949
TELEPHONE: (415) 506-0234
FAX: (415) 506-0238
E-MAIL: accjc@accjc.org
www.accjc.org

Chairperson
E. JAN KEHOE
CCLDIF

Vice Chairperson
LURELEAN B. GAINES
East Los Angeles College

President
BARBARA A. BENO

Vice President
GARMAN JACK POND

Associate Vice President
LILY OWYANG

Business Officer
DEANNE WILBURN

ITAS
TOM LANE

Administrative Assistant
CLARE GOLDBERG

RECEIVED
JAN 15 2008

January 9, 2008

Dr. Thomas M. Fallo
Superintendent/President
El Camino College
16007 Crenshaw Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90506

Dear President Fallo:

This will confirm the date of the next evaluation visit as you requested. El Camino College is scheduled for a comprehensive visit on Monday, October 6-Thursday, October 9, 2008.

If you have questions feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara A. Beno".

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Francisco Arce, Accreditation Liaison Officer

Handwritten initials in cursive script that appear to read "CC Bd".



**ACCREDITING
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JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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Chairperson
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East Los Angeles College

President
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LILY OWYANG

Business Officer
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TOM LANE

Administrative Assistant
CLARE GOLDBERG

RECEIVED

FEB 06 2008

January 31, 2008

Dr. Thomas M. Fallo
Superintendent/President
El Camino College
16007 Crenshaw Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90506

Dear President Fallo:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 9-11, 2008, reviewed the Progress Report submitted by the college and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Tuesday, November 20, 2007. The Commission took action to accept the report.

In taking this action, the Commission expects that at the time of the next comprehensive review in fall 2008, the Self Study Report should further clarify the organizational structure and functions at El Camino College and its center in Compton with an appropriate assessment of the effectiveness of the current administrative structure and appropriate organizational chart. The self study process should also be conducted with the understanding that El Camino College is required to meet accreditation standards **at all college locations.**

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. The Progress Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Dr. Thomas M. Fallo
El Camino College
January 31, 2008
Page Two

Please note that the next comprehensive evaluation of El Camino College will occur during **Fall 2008.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barbara A. Beno".

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Francisco Arce, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, El Camino Community College District
Mr. Ron Manzoni, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Member



President's

"The mission of El Camino College is to meet the educational needs of our diverse community and ensure student success by offering quality, comprehensive educational opportunities."

NEWSLETTER

Volume 20 • Special Edition

January 18, 2008

Governor Releases 2008-09 Community College Budget:

Governor Schwarzenegger released his 2008-09 budget, proposing significant cuts to all programs and services, including community colleges. This budget would impose a 10 percent reduction for the entire state budget across the board, totaling more than \$10.6 billion in cuts to most state general fund programs.

Under this proposal, the community college budget would be permanently reduced by \$484 million from the adopted 2007-08 budget level.

Proposed community college reductions include:

- \$404 for apportionments
- \$80 million for categorical programs

To achieve these goals, the governor proposes for 2008-09:

- No COLA on apportionments
- Growth on apportionments of approximately 1 percent
- A net reduction of \$51.4 million for categorical programs by not providing COLA or growth for these programs
- No enrollment fee increases
- Delaying the final 2007-08 apportionment revenue to districts to September 2008 instead of the already delayed July 2008 date

In addition, the Governor proposes a reduction in current year (2007-08) apportionments of \$40 million for community colleges. This reduction includes the caveat that he will work with the Chancellor's office and other groups to identify one-time savings in other programs to offset this proposed reduction. Any current year cuts and savings will have to be enacted through legislation that must be adopted during the 45-day Special Budget Session the Governor has called.

It is important to note that this is the first iteration of the proposed 2008-09 budget. The Legislature addresses and discusses this proposal and then a revised budget is presented in May. When the final budget will actually be adopted is anybody's guess.

Winter and Spring Enrollments Up!

Welcome to our new students!

Enrollment is well above the level at this same time last year. Here's what it looks like by the numbers: seats are up by more than 4 percent (+1839 seats); while

our Full-time Equivalent Students (FTES) are up by more than 6 percent (+351 FTES).

At this time, El Camino College stands at 74 percent of its final target of 7,883 FTES for the spring semester.

Winter session is also up – 8 percent above the FTES target.

Spring Flex Day

Mark your calendar – our Spring Flex Day is planned for February 6. With the focus on Student Learning Outcomes, participants will work on one of two primary tasks: program-level SLOs or course-level SLOs for their particular discipline. More information will be available about the day's tasks from your division dean before Flex Day. We are looking forward to seeing everyone to jump start our spring semester.

Get Ready for Spring! Register Now!

This is a great time to remind students that there is still time to register for Spring 2008. Our Spring Semester begins February 9 and free class schedules are available on the Web as well as throughout campus. As you know, online and telephone registration is quick and easy – no waiting in line – and it can be done on a student's own time! Just direct students to www.elcamino.edu and then click on **MyECC**.

ECC Online – January Updates!

The January edition of ECC Online is here! Read ECC Online and find out about an upcoming SSTARS event, new computer lab hours at Inglewood Center, and auditions for the ECC spring musical. Did you know that our own El Camino College Chorale performed this past holiday season with a fantastic

famous singer? You'll also want to read about the new Compton Center web site, highlighting the many academic and support programs at the Compton campus.

Don't forget to check ECC Online at the beginning of each month – <http://www.elcamino.edu/newsletter/onlineews.html>. Also, we want to hear from you. Help us communicate the good news happening at ECC. Just e-mail agarten@elcamino.edu.

CAMPUS CALENDAR

January

- 21 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday – Campus Closed
- 22 Board of Trustees Meeting
- 23 Citizen's Bond Oversight
Committee Meeting

February

- 6 Spring Flex Day
- 8 Lincoln's Day Holiday –
Campus Closed
- 9 Spring Semester Begins
- 11 Add/Program
Change Period Begins
- 18 Washington's Day Holiday –
Campus Closed
- 19 Board of Trustees Meeting
- 20 Citizen's Bond Oversight
Committee Meeting
- 21 University Fair
- 22 Last Day to Drop and be
Eligible for a Refund
Add/Program
Change Period Ends



The Daily Breeze

A home for the ECC humanities

By Shelly Leachman Staff Writer

Article Launched: 01/30/2008 11:59:07 PM PST

On a bright but brisk recent afternoon, inside a third-story office at El Camino College, two staffers engaged in a deep debate over which feature of the place was their favorite.

While the sink and the copier both got honorable mentions, the contest ultimately ended in a two-way tie between the high-density filing system and the view from the lounge.

Such is life these days for occupants of the school's new humanities building, a \$31 million modern mass of brick, concrete and glass that has fast become the apple of this campus's collective eye.

Less than two years after construction began in May 2006, the elegant, all-new edifice - the college's first in nearly 40 years - is set to start hosting classes when spring semester kicks off Feb. 9.

Its soft opening this week - faculty are in place, visitors are welcome - closes the book on a group of barracks-style buildings that long covered much of the campus.

The last of those so-called bungalows - which 60-plus years ago were trucked up to the Torrance-area campus from the Santa Ana Army Air Base to help launch the then-fledgling college - sat where the red-bricked humanities complex now stands.

"My first semester here I was in the building that used to be here. It was the oldest building on campus - run down, leaking roofs the desks were all mismatched, a hodgepodge," student Ashley Bachmann, 20, recalled Wednesday while leading an informal tour through the new building.

"It's so much nicer now," continued Bachmann, whose spring Spanish class will be held in the new structure. "The whole atmosphere, the updated technology - it's just amazing. I think it will really enhance the experience of students."

The humanities division's new digs are as cutting-edge as their predecessor was outdated.

The whole place - all 84,000 square feet of it - is outfitted with Wi-Fi. It includes 33 classrooms, 13 computer labs and 49 offices that altogether house 560 computers.

More than 47 miles of fiber-optic and other cable run through the tech-stuffed building that is also partly green, featuring recycled and eco-friendly materials in several spots.

It's also energy efficient - the structure's many windows let the natural light shine in, but are also partly clouded to help keep the place cool.

All that and more came at a cost of some \$31 million. Aside from state funds of about \$2.6 million, the rest came courtesy of Measure E, the college's \$394 million bond passed in 2002.

"Up to now we've been doing infrastructure projects under Measure E; this is the first real building people can see," college President Tom Fallo said. "That's the inspirational part. Now folks can see it's not all just behind the scenes."

And there's more to come.

An extension of the school's existing learning resource center is ongoing and will be completed by fall, Fallo said. Groundbreaking on a new parking structure and athletic facilities may come as soon as March, he said.

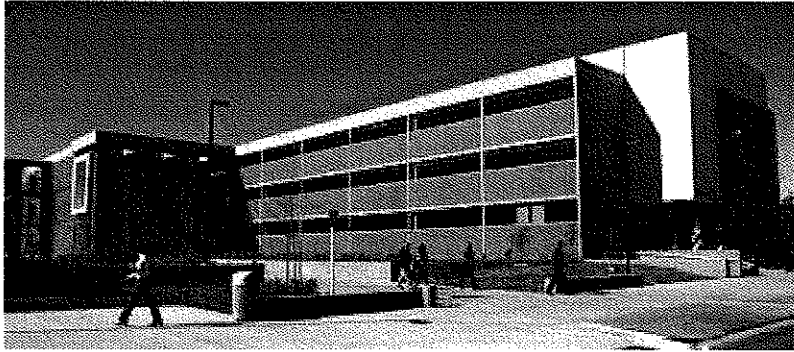
Plus, Fallo said, the college is mulling another new building, similar in style to the humanities complex, that would eventually house the math and business divisions.

Together, the structures would serve as "the face of the college in one sense," Fallo said.

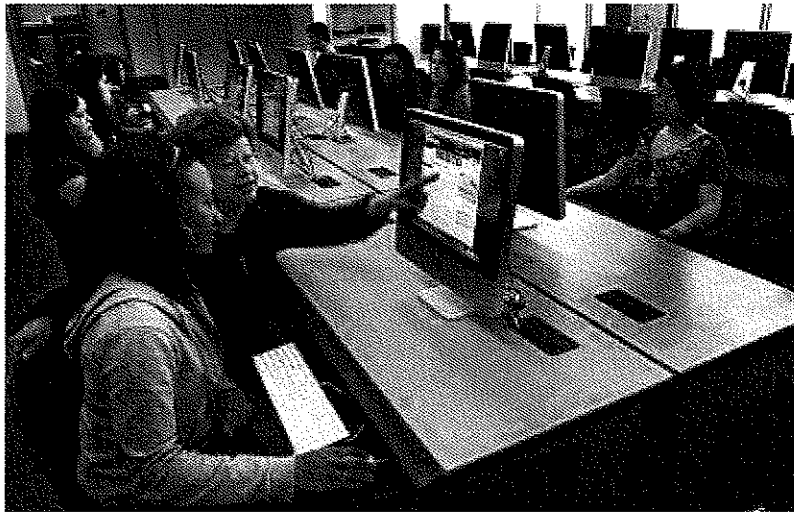
With its humanities building, El Camino has apparently taken a big first step toward making that face a reality.

Predicting it will provide a "better learning environment," as well as improved "efficiency and effectiveness" for the 12,000 students and 175 faculty members who will use the facility, Fallo said the new structure is now the hottest destination on campus.

"Back in 2002, the day after we passed the bond, everybody said, 'Oh Tom, this is great, the most exciting thing, wonderful but do I have to move my desk?'" Fallo recalled with a laugh. "Now they're starting to say, 'Maybe it's not so bad to move my desk.'"



The newly-built Humanities Building at El Camino College is a \$30 million structure that replaced the last of the old barracks-style buildings that once comprised the whole campus. (Bruce Hazelton/Staff Photographer)



El Camino College journalism adviser Joleen Combs, pointing, helps student Cleo Gordon learn the computer system in the school's state-of-the-art newspaper lab housed in the newly-built Humanities Building. (Bruce Hazelton/Staff Photographer)

[<](#)[1](#)[2](#)



El Camino College journalism adviser Joleen Combs, pointing, helps student Cleo Gordon learn the computer system in the school's state-of-the-art newspaper lab housed in the newly-built Humanities Building. (Bruce Hazelton/Staff Photographer)

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**Los Angeles County
School Trustees
Association**

RECEIVED

JAN 14 2008

January 9, 2008

2007-2008
Executive Board

Joseph Probst
President
Charter Oak Unified School District

Chakib Sambar
Vice President
Glendale Unified School District

Nicholas Aquino
Secretary/Treasurer
Los Nietos School District

Gilbert Garcia
Rowland Unified School District

Frank Morales
Bassett Unified School District

Joseph Rivera
El Rancho Unified School District

Mary Stanton
Long Beach Unified School District

Joylene Wagner
Glendale Unified School District

Clarence Shaw
Monrovia Unified School District

Richard LeGaspi
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District

Tom Jackson
Cerritos Community College District

Steven Llanusa
Claremont Unified School District

Steven Sturgeon
Wm. S. Hart Union High School District

Frank Kwan
Executive Director

Stacy Boyce
Association Assistant

TO: LACSTA Members
FROM: Joseph Probst, President
SUBJECT: **CALL FOR NOMINEES**

The Los Angeles County School Trustees Association is seeking interested members who wish to serve on the **Executive Board of Directors for the Association**. The Executive Board provides the leadership, information, workshops, and programs to the county association of board members. The Board holds three-four meetings a year in addition to the three general association meetings.

The Executive Board is composed of president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and ten directors. Each director serves at-large and is elected for a two-year term, from the Annual May Meeting to the Annual May Meeting of the second succeeding year. Directors may serve two consecutive terms. **All the officer positions and five director positions will be open.**

An application has been sent to each member of your Board via e-mail; **please confirm that each member received a copy**. Applications will be reviewed in March by the 2008-2009 Nominating Committee. Nominees will be presented to the Association in April. Elections will occur at the *Annual May Meeting* of the Association.

The application procedure is to submit a biographical sketch and statement of interest (form enclosed) to the LACSTA Nominating Committee, Education Center--Room 103, 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242-2890 or FAX (562) 803-6246. Should you have any questions, contact Stacy Boyce at (562) 922-6400.

PLEASE SUBMIT BY: Wednesday, February 27, 2008

JP:sb
Enclosure

CC : Board



**Los Angeles County
School Trustees
Association**

PLEASE RETURN BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2008

APPLICATION

[] Executive Board of Directors for the Association

Name _____ District _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Numbers: Residence (_____) _____ Business (_____) _____

Please write a short biographic sketch of 100 words or less. You might wish to include your background in education or related public service.

Also, please state your reasons for wishing to serve.

Please return (via U.S. mail, JET, or FAX) to: LACSTA - Nominating Committee via Stacy Boyce
Los Angeles County Education Center - Room 103
9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242-2890
FAX (562) 803-6246

RECEIVED

JAN 22 2008

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM
EL CAMINO COLLEGE
HUMANITIES DIVISION

DATE: January 17, 2008
TO: Dr. Francisco Arce
FROM: Barbara Jaffe
SUBJECT: Inna Newbury's Award

Attached you will find the letter I received today regarding Inna Newbury's Townsend Developmental College Teaching Award. I have also included a copy of Inna's teaching goals as well as the nomination letter on her behalf. We are truly fortunate to have Inna Newbury on staff here at ECC!

Cc: Dr. Thomas Fallo
Dean Tom Lew

CC: Board
Ann Garten



TOWNSEND PRESS

58 HOLLY OAK DRIVE
VOORHEES, NJ 08043

TELEPHONE 856-772-6410 • www.townsendpress.com • E-MAIL writersjj@aol.com

January 9, 2008

Dr. Barbara Jaffe
Associate Dean of Humanities
El Camino College
16007 Crenshaw Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90506

Dear Dr. Jaffe:

Thank you for your letter in support of Ms. Inna Newbury for a Townsend Developmental College Teaching Award. You have made it clear that Ms. Newbury is one of those teachers who show an exemplary dedication to helping their students learn.

I am happy to say, then, that Ms. Newbury is the recipient of a TP award for outstanding college teachers of developmental students. She is clearly one of those teachers we describe in the awards announcement:

On a caring and steady basis, semester after semester, they provide persistent, patient, sensitive, and respectful support—honoring the dignity and humanity of those in their classes.

A check made out to Ms. Newbury is enclosed, and I trust that you will be pleased to present it to her, along with the congratulations of the TP editorial staff.

All best wishes,

John Langan, President
Townsend Press



EL CAMINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

16007 Crenshaw Boulevard Torrance, California 90506-0001
Telephone (310) 532-3670 or 1-866-ELCAMINO

December 21, 2007

To the Townsend Press Teaching Award Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of Ms. Inna Newbury for a Townsend Developmental College Teaching Award. I can think of no finer candidate within our faculty of outstanding instructors—almost 200 in number! Inna epitomizes the consummate developmental educator, working tirelessly both inside and outside of the classroom, not only for her own students, but for all of the college's basic education students. Within the confines of this letter, I will outline a few of the reasons why Ms. Newbury is so deserving of this award.

Inna is a reading specialist and every semester she teaches four developmental reading courses, with about 35 students in each section. She was instrumental in creating our newest and lowest level developmental reading course, English 80, which addresses the needs of our students who often have physical, emotional, and academic limitations. In fact, she taught two sections of this new class this semester to experience, firsthand, her own curricular development come to fruition. Furthermore, she is currently gathering important data on this course and student population for further research.

Inna continues to collaborate with five other English 80 instructors in developing vocabulary lessons, tests, and planned activities. Once again, Inna has generously assumed leadership within the Humanities Division, and has expanded this collaboration to include a modified *Lesson Study* curriculum (an innovative faculty development protocol), and a more formal *Lesson Study* format for teacher training, beginning in the spring semester. In preparation for this innovative collaboration project, she has brought on campus a university professor for a series of workshops, attended by many faculty from four of our six departments in the Humanities Division (English, Reading, ESL, and Academic Strategies).

Ms. Newbury has also been instrumental in introducing to her students and other faculty the idea of *concept mapping* (graphic organizers) through the Inspiration software. This format has enabled her students to grasp topics, main ideas, details, and patterns of organization through visual representation. She also developed the college's first hybrid English 7 course (Developmental Speed and Power Reading). She worked with another professor in recruiting basic reading students, developing curriculum, tests, and assignments for the college's online course management system. She also worked on making our highest level basic reading course (English 84) a web-based course, with much success, I might add. In fact, over our six-week winter break, she will be working on developing lesson templates for the above mentioned courses to include the following elements for each lesson: Essential question for students to record and answer; Expected Student Learning Outcomes; Quick thinks; Independent practice; and Learning objectives.

Last summer, in her 'free time,' Inna worked on updating all of the materials in the *Reading Orientation Packets* for our new developmental teachers. While teaching her classes this past academic year, she volunteered to facilitate and present ten workshops and trainings for our basic education faculty. In fact, there has been such a need for strong reading instructors that Inna helped introduce reading concepts to our basic writing instructors who plan to teach a section of developmental reading.

If this isn't enough of a commitment to our students and faculty, Inna, was the Teacher Education Program's (TEP) Faculty Development Coordinator; she also served on the Math Title V Steering and Basic Skills Committees, all with the focus of educating other faculty on the needs of our developmental students. In the same vein, she worked with the Academic Senate's Faculty Development Team to improve the college's professional development for part-time and full-time faculty through the Basic Skills funding and Title V grants.

So many of our instructors, while strong and skillful teachers, close their classrooms doors and "teach" their subject matter for a couple of hours and then leave behind their students and their lessons for the day. Inna shares her expertise and passion for developmental education with her students, for sure, but her ability to transform her colleagues' views of basic reading education, to have them participate in workshops and trainings, requires a "Pied Piper" type of charisma and brilliance that only Inna Newbury possesses.

I would like to include a few of her students' comments from her recent evaluation to show the impact Inna has made with her developmental reading students: "Ms. Newbury has helped push me forward in this class and given me the opportunity to move from English 80 all the way to 1A [freshman composition] and she left it up to me..." "Ms. Newbury is a very wonderful teacher; she cares about us and wants us to learn for the best." Perhaps, though, the most powerful 'reference' comes from one of Inna's reading colleagues who reflects on Inna's gifts: "With her work ethic and genuine compassion for her students, Inna makes a difference in the classroom and in lives. Unwilling to settle for the status quo, she challenges both herself and her students to work at the nexus of current learning theory and advances in learning technology. Her leadership in the reading department has encouraged all of us to be a little bit better..."

As you have stated, the winner of your contest should provide "persistent, patient, sensitive, and respectful support—honoring the dignity and humanity of those in their classes." As an educator, Ms. Inna Newbury reflects all of these qualities in addition to her commitment to our developmental colleagues at El Camino College. I am honored to nominate such a fine candidate for this award through Townsend Press.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Jaffe
Associate Dean of Humanities
El Camino College
(310) 660-3018

My Goals as a Teacher of Developmental Students

By

Ms. Inna Newbury

I suppose that my first deliberate goal is to connect and support the students enrolled in my pre-baccalaureate courses. I believe they benefit from knowing that I care about them – that I am their number one supporter and can direct them to a variety of campus resources to meet their needs. I also believe in reaching and teaching the whole student, not simply addressing their reading skills. Therefore, I learn their names immediately, usually by taking digital pictures. (They still love picture day!) And on the first day, I send them on a scavenger hunt designed to discover all the resources on campus that can provide their support network. I also share my own fear of starting college and the sense of insecurity that plagued my youth as the only female in my extended family to earn a degree. From that discussion onward, I incorporate college success strategies in class activities. Ultimately, I do whatever I can to demonstrate my concern, because I believe they engage in learning when they recognize that we are a team – that their instructor believes in them, cares for them personally, provides a safe learning atmosphere, and tailors specific learning experiences for them.

Brain-based research concurs with what we know anecdotally, that students need emotional safety to learn, so beyond connecting and supporting, I have learned to proactively communicate both in my syllabus and in early classroom discussions explicit expectations for productive student behavior. After that first discussion, we frequently review these expectations, addressing both uncivil behavior that interferes with the learning environment and conditions that generate academic achievement. The goal is to assure respect for all stakeholders and deal directly with undercurrents so that each one knows the rules and results of infractions, ultimately recognizing that their participation will not be wasted or devalued and that their freedom to make mistakes in a safe environment will result in growth of confidence and skill.

As my students progress in their academic reading skills and strategies, I also want them to build a foundational knowledge for their transfer courses, so I plan activities based upon Robert Glaser's research demonstrating that students retain: 10% of what they read; 20% of what they hear; 30% of what they see; *50% of what they see and hear; 70% of what they discuss with others; 80% of what they experience personally; 90% of what they say and do; 95% of what they teach to someone else.* I use PowerPoint lectures, require daily collaboration with partners

both in and outside of class, and set up group activities requiring them to teach their peers what they have learned. I find that my class has far more energy and students report better understanding when I plan my lessons in 10-15 minute blocks with purposeful "quick thinks," allowing time to discuss ideas with their partners, re-word their notes, complete an exercise and compare notes, or answer an essential question following each segment.

I also take efforts to develop web-based classes so that my students become more comfortable with technology, since they will use computers for the rest of their lives. A secondary result of this decision is that the energy level of the class increases dramatically when our face-to-face sessions involve interactive learning instead of independent testing. In our reading lab or independently my students utilize the townsendpress.com website for practicing analytical skills, totalreader.com for eliciting reading strategies, and my Etudes course management system for testing their progress in comprehending academic texts. That leaves our face-to-face sessions free for lessons, discussions, collaboration and presentations that address the variety of learning styles and the diverse skill levels of the entire class.

Finally, due to research and collaboration with my reading colleagues and faculty members teaching transfer level English, history and political science courses, I employ authentic activities/assessments and establish motivation for purposeful reading. We collaborated across disciplines to gather reading material and determine skills that would better prepare our students for transfer level classes, and we collaborated in our own department to complete a rigorous program review that resulted in a shift from high-stress, high-stake exit exams toward an emphasis on approximations toward mastery involving active engagement with text. Therefore, I teach and model skills and strategies, then allow students to demonstrate their understanding by annotating and analyzing articles chosen to prepare them for their future courses, for becoming active American citizens, and for their future careers. Thus, I can assure that they are comprehending more complex academic texts, building foundational knowledge and developing specific academic reading and college success skills/strategies to benefit them in future courses and for life-long learning. At that point, I can rest that my job has been well done.

MLB.com

01/30/2008 6:00 PM ET

MLB sets first Urban Invitational

Southern U., Bethune, UCLA, USC in benefit tourney

By Jim Molony / MLB.com

Major League Baseball's Urban Youth Academy will host the first Urban Invitational baseball tournament, Major League Baseball announced on Wednesday.

The inaugural event will feature Southern University, Bethune-Cookman, UCLA and USC in a six-game tournament to be played at the MLB Urban Youth Academy in Compton, Calif., USC's Dedeaux Field and UCLA's Jackie Robinson Stadium beginning Friday, Feb. 29, and continuing through Sunday, March 2. Both games on Saturday, March 1, will be played at the MLB Urban Youth Academy and broadcast live on ESPN2.

The participation of historically black universities Bethune-Cookman of Daytona Beach, Fla., and Southern (Baton Rouge, La.) in the tournament is part of MLB's ongoing diversity and youth initiatives.

"The Urban Invitational Baseball Tournament is a part of our continued focus on reviving the majesty of baseball in the African-American community," Major League Baseball executive vice president of operations Jimmie Lee Solomon said in the press release announcing the event.

"This tournament, along with the other programs at the MLB Urban Youth Academy, the Civil Rights Game and many of our other efforts, is reflective of the League's commitment to diversity, inclusion and engagement of our nation's young people. Our goal is to make sure that every child who wants to play baseball has an opportunity to do so."

Fans attending the tournament games on March 1 will also be entertained by live performances of Southern University's "Human Jukebox" and USC's Trojan Marching Band. Bethune-Cookman University and Southern University will play each other at 1 p.m. PT on Sunday at the academy.

"ESPN is proud to be associated with Major League Baseball's urban initiatives," Len DeLuca, ESPN senior vice president, programming and acquisitions, said in the press release. "The second Civil Rights Game and new Urban Invitational -- 40 years since the tragic death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. -- are on the heels of our observance last year of the 60th anniversary of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier. ESPN is honored to join with MLB to celebrate baseball's cultural history."

The MLB Urban Youth Baseball Academy encompasses more than 15 acres on the campus of El Camino College, Compton Center. The academy is a state-of-the-art facility featuring four fields, including a show field, batting cages and other training facilities. The academy operates on a year-round basis, offering free baseball and softball instruction, as well as clinics to youth throughout Southern California.

"On behalf of our team, I would like to say how honored we are to have been invited to an event like this, especially in its first year," Bethune-Cookman Coach Mervyl Melendez said in the press release. "We hope that the Urban Invitational Baseball Tournament continues to grow and more people notice what Major League Baseball is doing for college baseball and historically black colleges."

Tickets to the games being played at the MLB Urban Youth Academy will be available for purchase on gameday for \$5.00. Proceeds from the ticket sale will benefit the Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy, which is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.

The tournament schedule (all times Pacific):

- Friday, Feb. 29, UCLA vs. Southern University, 6 p.m. at UCLA; USC vs. Bethune-Cookman, 6 p.m. at USC.
- Saturday, March 1, UCLA vs. Bethune-Cookman, 5 p.m. at MLB Urban Youth Academy;
*Battle of the Bands -- Southern's "Human Jukebox" and USC Trojan Marching Band; Southern vs. USC, 8 p.m. at MLB Urban Youth Academy.
- Sunday, March 2, Southern vs. Bethune-Cookman, 1 p.m. at MLB Urban Youth Academy; USC vs. UCLA, 1 p.m. at USC.

The Daily Breeze

Torrance weighs presenting 2 bonds to voters

By Shelly Leachman, Staff Writer

Article Launched: 01/26/2008 12:12:28 AM PST

A new survey of likely Torrance voters reveals support - by the thinnest of margins - for a package of nearly \$350 million in school bonds contemplated for the November ballot.

The phone survey of 600 voters also showed that more than 35 percent believe district facilities are in "great" need of renovation. Nearly 43 percent believe such need to be "moderate."

"I am cautiously optimistic and at same time encouraged by the data that we see," school board President Michael Ernst said in assessing the results. "Generally, the community sees a need, and that's big."

The Torrance Unified School District was informed this week that the survey, conducted Nov. 16 to Dec. 2, revealed 56.7 percent of those polled would green-light such bonds to improve school facilities. Under state law, 55 percent is required for approval.

Working with Bay Area bond consultants Sidewalk Strategies, the school system is weighing whether to attempt two bond measures - one large, one small, together totaling nearly \$350 million - at one time.

The rationale behind such a strategy, Ernst said, is to give voters a stronger sense of choice by floating one bond measure to fund the fixes deemed most dire alongside a separate measure to finance projects that the public may consider less urgent.

For instance, an approximately \$280 million measure would cover critical infrastructure and safety repairs districtwide, such as roofs and electrical systems, plus a total rebuild of J.H. Hull Middle School.

An estimated \$60-plus-million second measure would address less urgent improvements, such as upgraded athletic facilities and the construction of music and art rooms at elementary and middle schools.

Under the dual-pronged approach, the corresponding tax rates for the bonds would be about \$40 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation on the larger measure and \$10 to \$15 per \$100,000 on the smaller, according to the new report.

"From the way these bonds have gone in other communities, they usually both pass," Ernst said, while acknowledging the possibility that only the smaller bond measure - or neither - could win

over voters. "It's not just a mega-bond this way, and I think people will understand that they do have a choice.

"I truly believe that this community will support a bond that makes sense and that's what we're putting together."

Torrance voters have been lukewarm at most to previous school bonds, approving them just once - 1998's \$42 million Measure R - in the district's 60-plus year history.

Long lamenting the deteriorating state of its 33 campuses, for which Hull became the de facto poster child, the district in June 2006 asked voters to approve a \$280 million bond measure.

That effort, Measure T, failed, earning 52.6 percent yes votes, and Hull was closed to students in June 2007. Its roughly 700 students were indefinitely relocated to former adult education site Sam Levy this fall.

District officials have pledged to return the school to its original Arlington Avenue home once it can afford and complete reconstruction. But that may only be possible with a new bond measure, they say.

The timing of when the district should go to voters is still up in the air, but the feasibility study showed the bond measures are more likely to succeed during November's presidential election, rather than on the June primary ballot.

School board members would have to decide by August to place the measures on the November ballot.

Trustees are looking ahead to that possibility, and Ernst said public workshops will be planned as early as April to glean community input.

"We need to work like it's not going to pass," Ernst said of any potential bond measure. "We need to put together the campaign like it's not going to pass because the city notoriously hasn't passed bonds.

"We are committed to putting together that kind of campaign."

Redondo appeals to school pride

By Shelly Leachman Staff Writer

Article Launched: 01/20/2008 10:59:37 PM PST

Redondo Beach Unified is going for a bond measure - and they're going big.

In its first such attempt in seven years, the school district on Feb. 5 will seek voter approval of a \$145million measure. (The \$52 million Measure E passed in 2000.)

"We're asking people for money, and we're very sensitive to that," Superintendent Steven Keller said. "We understand people are on fixed incomes, that there's a slowing economy but we believe this is prudent, appropriate and in the best interest of the community to consider."

Every district campus, including the Redondo-run South Bay Adult School, would see some fixes under Measure C.

For elementary and middle schools, the intended upgrades - many of them leftover projects that were planned for but ultimately weren't covered by Measure E - include modernizing libraries, renovating playgrounds and erecting student-services buildings and new computer labs.

The adult site is slated for classroom modernization as well as handicap-accessibility upgrades.

Also built into the bond measure is a \$5million repayment to the district's Aviation Fund. (It borrowed money from itself for earlier projects at several schools.)

But should Measure C pass muster, most of the money - about \$94 million - would be set aside for a slew of additions and upgrades to the centenarian Redondo Union High School.

Officials and bond proponents alike have increasingly lamented what's been described as "dilapidation" at the 55-acre site, which received only a few fixes, mostly classroom modernizations, under the earlier Measure E.

"The high school is a real landmark a source of pride for the community," said bond campaign chairman Kurt Schmalz of Citizens for Great Redondo Schools. "To see it almost falling apart in many respects is disturbing."

Among other problems, they point to a warped, worn and in parts peeling floor in the circa-1951 small gymnasium and equally aged locker rooms that have rusting pipes, nonfunctioning showers and peeling paint.

And then there's the pool - an indoor facility gone outdoor when the sagging roof became a safety hazard - that Keller said either must be renovated or shut down.

"To do nothing to not take this to voters would be criminal," Keller said. "Someone is going to have to address this, either now or in the immediate future.

"Mark my words, these needs will not change. They will only get worse," he added. "The price tag today, clearly it's a lot of money, but the price tag in five to 10 years will be significantly more."

Among potential projects at the nearly 2,500-student high school are an aquatic center, upgraded athletic fields and facilities, including an all-weather track, renovation of the band building and auditorium and a new student services building.

Although no formal opposition to the bond measure has emerged, critics have called the sports-facility plans overkill that will benefit only athletes, questioned the district's money-management capabilities, and wondered whether the school system would be able to adequately maintain the facilities it hopes to build.

Calling the latter "a fair concern," Keller said the district is already on track to establish a plan aimed at preventing such problems. He defended the implementation of Measure E, countering that some planned projects went unfinished only due to increased costs.

Keller further argued that all students, and many community members, regularly use the district's many sports and recreation facilities.

"Our schools are not little fiefdoms or island nations," he said. "That's the synergy of the schools and the community. Our facilities have been used over the decades and will be used for decades to come, to enhance that connection."

"This bond is not just about schools," he added.

The estimated cost to homeowners for the 30-year bond measure is just shy of \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation annually. (Property owners are already paying roughly \$10 per \$100,000 on Measure E, according to Schmalz, the bond chairman.)

The earlier bond measure passed with a whopping 75 percent of the vote. Acknowledging that such an approval rate this time around will be tough to get Schmalz said he believes it has "a fighting chance."

A November survey solicited by the bond campaign found that 57.8 percent of residents were likely to vote in favor. Measure C needs 55percent approval to pass.

Several surrounding school districts - including Torrance, Hermosa and El Segundo - lost their most recent bond bids.

"I think it will be very challenging for us, but I'm actually very confident," Schmalz said. "Redondo has always supported education, and I believe they will do so again.

"This is something that will take care of the school district for an entire generation."

As for the current generation of Redondo students, they'd get a "tremendous boost" to their collective school pride if the potential renovations come to fruition, said Redondo Union Principal Mary Little.

"There's a sense that you're important when you have a nice place to be," she said recently, while leading a tour of her campus' most glaring examples of disrepair.

"Some of this work is long overdue," Little added. "The kids deserve a nice facility, so we are hoping we get some good news in a few weeks."

The Daily Breeze

2-3-08

South Bay cities pay lobbyists to get funds flowing

When El Segundo wanted to replace sewer pipes or extend roadways, they called Gerry Warburg.

The Washington, D.C., lobbyist used his know-how to help the city secure the funding needed for several improvement projects.

El Segundo isn't alone. In addition to sending lobbyists to Sacramento, several South Bay cities hire lobbyists to help get the attention from federal lawmakers.

It's not cheap - South Bay cities that hire lobbyists send up to \$160,000 each year to D.C. firms.

But local officials say it's a sound investment. They have received millions of federal dollars for infrastructure, environmental, technological and transportation improvements.

Massie Ritsch, communications director of the Center for Responsive Politics, said cities generally seek lobbyists to help find funding for specific projects.

"Lobbyists have connections to certain offices of people who control the purse strings," Ritsch said. "They make the case for their client, and hope the lawmaker takes the bait."

El Segundo pays Warburg's firm, Cassidy and Associates, \$160,000 annually - which is more than neighboring cities pay lobbying firms. But City Manager Jeff Stewart said it's worth it.

"We ask the lobbyists if there's a potential to get X, Y and Z. They say what's available. The minute they're not able to get money for us, it ends the relationship," Stewart said.

Warburg said he spends a lot of time working with Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Transportation officials for El Segundo, which has worked to keep the airport from expanding into the city.

"It's not glamorous work," Warburg said. "It's a lot of old-fashioned research and talking to various federal agencies. It's tracking bills very closely and looking to see if there's any opportunity to help the El Segundo taxpayers."

He said he worked hard to keep the Los Angeles Air Force Base in El Segundo, as well as helping the city upgrade its sewer system and other infrastructure by making the case to lawmakers that the city needs federal aid.

Redondo Beach will pay David Turch and Associates \$88,000 this year to help bring in grants to keep polluted water and trash from reaching the ocean, and other city improvements, said City Manager Bill Workman.

The firm represents more than a dozen California cities, along with an electronics company and other businesses.

"We want to ensure that our particular needs are continually in front of Congress," Workman said. "We also have them watch on things that would require new unfunded mandates on cities. We oppose unfunded mandates but, not being in Washington, D.C., at the time, we can't advocate for those things."

In November, Lawndale also hired David Turch and Associates to help direct federal funds its way. The city hopes the firm, which it will pay about \$60,000, can get the city money for a new community center, said City Manager Keith Breskin.

"We don't know what the best way is to secure funds from the federal government," Breskin said. "These lobbyists are doing it every day."

Last year, Torrance contracted with two lobbying firms to work in Washington and Sacramento, said Management Associate Eleanor Jones.

"It's a relatively new thing for us, but I think they have some visibility there in D.C. and Sacramento - they can look out for you," Jones said.

Last month, Gardena approved a contract extension to continue working with Capitol Hill Group at a price of \$60,000 a year.

City Manager Mitch Lansdell said the relationship has paid dividends for the city.

In the last seven years, Lansdell said, the firm helped get \$350,000 to clean contaminated soil and groundwater in the city; \$750,000 for new police equipment; about \$500,000 for a Rosecrans Avenue revitalization program; and about \$1.5 million for roadway, wastewater and storm water infrastructure improvements.

This year, Lansdell said he is asking for funding for senior citizens' programs and more revitalization efforts for Rosecrans Avenue.

"What I think helps and, I believe, has made a difference is having someone there shepherding projects, watching grant funding, and looking for opportunities within the city's needs," Lansdell said. "We've spent the money wisely."

The Daily Breeze

Local hospitals cope with a critical nursing shortage

By Melissa Evans Staff Writer

Article Launched: 02/03/2008

Before asking any questions, patients would often apologize.

"They felt bad for disturbing us," said Dina McGee, a registered nurse at Little Company of Mary Hospital in Torrance. "People have this expectation that nurses are too busy to talk."

A few years ago, that was certainly true; it was common for nurses to handle up to a dozen patients at a time in some units. California had the worst nurse-to-patient ratio in the country for a decade running.

Nurses stretched shifts into overtime, while non-urgent patients sometimes waited for hours to be seen.

Workloads are considerably lighter now thanks to sweeping new state legislation, but it has come at a substantial cost to hospitals - a contentious law passed in 1999 required hospitals to gradually lower the number of patients assigned to nurses, now no more than five in most departments.

The final phase of that legislation - the first of its kind in the nation - went into effect Jan. 1, further decreasing the number of patients per nurse in specialized surgical and cardiac units. The ratios could go even lower based on the severity of illnesses, something

hospitals are now required to take into account when assigning personnel.

Most agree the new law has led to improved job satisfaction for nurses and better care. The evidence, however, is anecdotal for now. The California Department of Health is compiling a report to be released later this year looking at patient mortality rates before and after the ratios took effect.

In the meantime, hospital officials are scrambling to meet the new requirements in the face of a historic nursing shortage and an aging work force.

"Nurses don't grow on trees," said Kathy Harren, vice president of nursing services for Little Company of Mary. "We're facing a public health crisis in nursing services, and it's been a huge challenge."

Hospitals have invested large sums of money into local nursing schools, and some have sweetened job offers to graduates by promising scholarships and other financial perks.

Local hospitals have also turned to traveling nurse agencies, a burgeoning industry that sends out workers for 13-week assignments. These nurses, however, come with a price - they cost about a

third more due to administrative costs charged by the agency, which amounts to millions of dollars in added expense for hospitals.

Little Company has spent about \$10 million to hire dozens of new nurses since the first phase of the legislation took effect in 2004, Harren said. The hospital added another 14 nurses in 2007 to satisfy the final phase of the mandate, which lowered ratios in such areas as specialty care.

Torrance Memorial has hired 340 nurses since 2003, 140 of them in just the past two years.

The South Bay's only public hospital, County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center near Torrance, has hired close to 350 nurses since 2005, officials said.

Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center in Harbor City avoided any last-minute scrambles by hiring hundreds of nurses in 1999 when the state Legislature passed the law, said Bonnie Tann-Demmin, chief nurse executive.

"We set up a process to even go below those ratios in some areas," she said.

Each nurse costs \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year, not including benefits - and recruitment is competitive.

Employment interviews are often conducted at job fairs, with offers made on the spot. Most hospitals offer scholarship money for nursing students and will even pay their school loans.

The new legislation has also handed power to nurses, who have more sway in managing medical units and scheduling their hours and days off.

"Nurses are a hard-to-come-by commodity," said Dr. Lee Weiss, director of emergency services at Centinela Hospital Medical Center. "It's a hard job, and nurses can burn out fast and leave the field. Keeping nurses happy is very difficult. We're trying more and more to reach out to them as partners."

South Bay hospitals also contribute heavily to local nursing schools, padding budgets that have been slashed by the state to pay for more teachers and classroom space - two of the biggest needs, school officials say.

El Camino College and Los Angeles Harbor College have each gained a classroom of 24 students thanks to partnerships with Little Company of Mary. Students attend classes and practice their skills in a high-tech simulation classroom at the hospital.

The hope is that when they graduate and pass state licensing tests, they will return to the hospital where they studied, Harren said.

The local schools graduate fewer than 100 nurses a year, even though the waiting list for prospective students is up to a year and a half.

"The problem is that nursing programs are costly," said Susan Zareski, interim director of the nursing program at El Camino. "It's difficult to get hospital rotations for more than 10 to 12 students at a time when you only have one instructor."

There is some good news, though. Thanks to public and private partnerships, the number of nursing school graduates grew by nearly 70 percent from 2003-04 to 2007-08, according to a report released in October by the University of California, San Francisco.

If this pace continues, California will be more prepared to meet nursing demands of the future as older nurses retire. Given that the average age of nurses is now 47, the San Francisco researchers estimate California hospitals will need to fill about 89,000 nursing jobs by 2030.

Now, California hospitals are about 11,000 nurses shy of meeting state guidelines, according to the report. Most local hospitals operate with a 10 percent to 15 percent nurse vacancy rate, officials say.

This void is filled largely by hiring temporary traveling nurses, who move from city to city every three months or so. Requests for these nurses spiked in 2004 when the first phase of nurse ratios went into effect, and again toward the end of 2007 to prepare for the last phase, said Wendy Newman, spokeswoman for San Diego-

based AMN Healthcare Services, the nation's largest traveling nurse agency.

If a nurse in Michigan wants to live in California for the winter - housing and travel paid - it's fairly easy to make a match, Newman said.

"The demand in California is high," she said.

The San Francisco report estimates that California hospitals hired 4,000 traveling nurses in 2006.

These workers, however, cost about \$40 more an hour than regular permanent employees, said Peggy Berwald, vice president of patient services and chief nursing officer at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. The hospital has made it a priority to reduce that cost through recruitment, and it has paid off - the number of travelers has decreased from 119 in 2003 to 20 now, Berwald said.

A big part of their success stems from the hospital's investment in training programs and support for new nurses, she said. Torrance Memorial has spent about

\$4.5 million over the last two years to put new nurses through a five-month "residency" program after they are hired.

Torrance Memorial also received a state grant to hire a full-time coordinator to develop better relationships with nursing schools in greater Los Angeles.

Schools and hospitals have collaborated to make it easier for older nurses to get master's degrees so they can teach, and have also created pathways for health professionals in other fields to become certified in nursing.

The ratios have been difficult to achieve, "but they have really caused us all to think more creatively," Berwald said. "We need to think out of the box on how we can collaborate and help each other. This is our future, so we better figure it out."

Deborah Burger, president of the California Nurse Association, agreed. The state had no ratios in place before this legislation - that situation was bad for hospitals and nurses, she said. "Nurses never got breaks or meals," Burger said. "They'd spend hours after work charting."

More nurses are apt to stay in the profession with better working conditions, she added. Most important, patients are safer and happier.

"We can finally take a deep breath and say that we can adequately care for people," Burger said. "We can develop relationships with people, answer their questions, take the time to talk. It's made all the difference."

Daniel Weintraub: Proposition 92 would tie more knots in state budget

By Daniel Weintraub

Published 12:00 am PST Thursday, January 31, 2008

Proposition 92 on the Feb. 5 ballot offers Californians a chance to increase spending on the community colleges and then lock in that spending – at the expense of health care, assistance for the poor, public safety and all of the other programs in the state budget.

The measure is not written that way, of course. It simply asks voters to give a boost to a popular program. The consequences, while inevitable, are never mentioned in the text of the initiative.

And this, in a nutshell, is the problem with much of the ballot-box budgeting in which California has engaged over the years.

These measures often ignore the tough choices, pretending that voters can get something for nothing. But there is no free lunch, and there is no free money, especially during an economic downturn when the state already faces a deficit. If you spend more on one thing, you have to spend less on something else or raise taxes.

Proposition 92 is the brainchild of community college advocates who have never liked the way the state implemented Proposition 98, a constitutional amendment that set minimum spending levels for kindergarten through community college education.

The earlier measure, which voters adopted in 1988, was unclear about how its guaranteed spending would be divided between the K-12 schools and the community colleges. After it passed, legislators decided to freeze the split where it was the year before: K-12 schools would get 89 percent of the education budget while community colleges got 11 percent.

But the share given to community colleges declined over the years to about 10 percent, before rebounding a bit during the tenure of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has been a big advocate for the two-year schools.

The intent of Proposition 92 is to push funding levels back up to where they would be if the community colleges were getting the share to which their advocates feel they are entitled. That might sound like a tiny change, but we are talking about big numbers here.

Proposition 92 would base community college funding in part on the growth in the population of Californians most likely to attend the schools: those between ages 17 and 25. It would increase

spending even if fewer of those young people decided to attend the colleges. It would also increase spending whenever the state's unemployment rate exceeded 5 percent.

The result, over the next three years, would be an additional \$300 million a year for education. For the first two years, about half of that money would go to the community colleges and half to K-12 schools. In the third year, most of the new money would go to community colleges. The entire community college budget is about \$8 billion per year, including state and local tax revenue, student fees and federal funds.

At the same time that Proposition 92 would increase spending, the initiative also would mandate a fee reduction for community college students. Currently, those students who pay fees are charged \$20 per unit, or \$600 for a full load of classes for one academic year. This measure would reduce those fees to \$15 per unit and then tie them to a formula that would make it very difficult for the Legislature to increase them again.

But California's community college fees already are the lowest in the nation, and they are waived completely for students who demonstrate financial need. That exemption currently applies to about one-fourth of community college students, according to the nonpartisan legislative analyst. According to the analyst, a student living at home with a younger sibling and married parents could have a family income up to about \$65,000 annually and still qualify for the waiver.

Reducing fees would cost the state about \$70 million a year because the money would be replaced by tax revenue. This money would come out of the increased portion of the budget that the measure directs to community colleges.

California's community colleges are an essential option for students who struggle in high school and do not qualify for a four-year university, and they are a more cost-effective way for more advanced students to get their general education before moving on to the University of California or the California State University system.

Community colleges also play a crucial role in providing training for technical jobs that do not require a full, four-year college degree. They have become an important gateway to the middle class for immigrants and their children.

But the college system's value ought to be measured in relation to all of the state's other programs. Providing access to health care for community college students, for example, might be more important than reducing their fees. Providing homes for foster children might be a higher priority than expanding class offerings in the community colleges. These are distinctions that should be made by legislators and governors, the people elected to weigh competing priorities.

Ballot-box budgeting makes it more difficult for lawmakers to exercise the kind of judgment we expect of them. And Proposition 92 is ballot-box budgeting at its worst.

Newsday.com

February 1, 2008

College panned for hiring out-of-state architect

BY CHAU LAM

Two Democratic county lawmakers charged that Suffolk County Community College violated local preference law by hiring an out-of-state architectural firm to design its new library in Riverhead.

Presiding Officer William Lindsay (D-Holbrook) and Legis. Wayne Horsley (D-Babylon) said the law requires that county contracts be awarded to businesses based in Suffolk or Nassau unless none has the credentials or expertise to provide the service. "They chose a firm from outside the area and we feel that the dollar should remain at home," Horsley said yesterday in an interview.

The county law, passed in 1993, was intended to help promote economic activity on Long Island.

George Gatta, the college's executive vice president, said the hiring of local firms is required only when feasible. "In this case it wasn't practical in terms of cost and the quality of the proposal," Gatta said.

The college's committee in charge of evaluating the library project reviewed eight proposals, six of which were submitted by firms based on Long Island or companies that have offices here. The nine-member committee selected JCJ Architecture, a firm based in Hartford, Conn., because the company's bid of \$980,000 was the lowest, and its proposal was judged to be the best, Gatta said. And, unlike the other firms, JCJ Architecture is able to provide all the services and expertise in-house, Gatta said.

"We don't believe that we're in violation of the local law," Gatta said. "Our position is that no one has the level of expertise we needed. JCJ did."

Lindsay and Horsley said many libraries have been built in Suffolk, and they find it hard to believe that the college could not find a firm on Long Island that could handle the job.

The college is building a new library - 35,000 to 39,000 square feet - at its Eastern Campus for \$12 million. The library, which will include a cafe, is expected to be completed in fall 2009, said Mary Lou Araneo, the college's vice president for institutional advancement.

Lindsay would not say whether he will insist that the college hire one of the local firms. "At this time, I respectfully request that the Community College carefully consider this matter and take all steps necessary to comply with our local preference law," he said in a Jan. 25 letter to the college.

Chevron finishes 1st solar project phase

January 31, 2008

SAN PABLO, Calif. (AP) - Chevron Corp. (NYSE:CVX) said Thursday it completed the first phase of a \$35.2 million solar-power (OTCBB:SOPW) project installation at the Contra Costa Community College District in California.

The overall project includes a 3.2 megawatt solar-power generation system, energy-management systems, electrical system replacements and high-efficiency lighting, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment. The first phase of installation was for 2.65 megawatts worth of power generation, with the rest to be added this year.

Chevron said the project is the largest solar-power installation at a North American higher-education institution.

A one-megawatt plant running continuously at full capacity can power 778 households each year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Solar technology has lower capacity since its power generation is constrained by availability of the sun.

Chevron has installed the solar panels in six parking lots at Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College and Los Medanos College within the district. The energy company expects the solar panels to generate about 4 million kilowatt-hours of power each year, which will supply up to half of the district's peak electricity needs.

The renewable power will offset the production of about 5.6 million pounds of carbon-dioxide emissions annually, which is equivalent to removing 629 cars from the road or planting 636 acres of trees, Chevron said.

Contra Costa will offset about \$8.5 million of the project's cost in rebates and other incentives through state incentive programs for solar power. The additional \$26.7 million will be funded with bonds and recovered over time through annual savings for energy costs.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Monday, January 21, 2008

Keeping Needy Students in College Hinges More on Academic Success Than Financial Aid, Study Finds

By ELIZABETH F. FARRELL

Colleges that assume they can improve undergraduate retention rates by giving low-income students more financial aid may be wrong, according to a working paper by Serge Herzog, director of institutional analysis at the University of Nevada at Reno.

In his paper, Mr. Herzog also concludes that students from higher-income families are more likely to persist in college when given grants or scholarships than are their counterparts from lower-income families when given those forms of aid.

"Most other research concludes that financial aid helps low-income students the most," said Mr. Herzog in an interview. "My findings suggest the opposite is true."

In his paper, "Estimating the Influence of Financial Aid on Student Retention," Mr. Herzog analyzes data collected on 5,000 students at the University of Nevada, whose standardized test scores and levels of high-school preparation are representative of those at other moderately selective public research universities.

According to Mr. Herzog, his study uses a unique methodology. He studied two groups of students—those who received grant and loan aid and those who received grant aid only—and compared each of those with groups of students who did not receive any aid, but would have been just as likely to qualify for aid, given their financial resources and academic preparation, among other factors. He further separated each group into three income levels, based on the amount their families were expected to contribute to their college costs. That approach, he said, eliminated many variables that he believes have skewed the findings of similar studies.

Freshmen with an expected family contribution of \$10,000 or more who were most likely to receive merit aid were 18 percent more likely to return for their sophomore year than similar students who did not receive merit aid, the study found, after controlling for performance in mathematics courses and overall grade-point average. And for every additional \$1,000 those students received in grant aid, their likelihood of retention rose by 3 percent.

Students in the two lower-income groups, with expected family contributions below \$10,000, did not show an increased likelihood of staying in college when granted similar aid, Mr. Herzog found, even though he controlled the same variables of math grades and overall grade-point average in that analysis.

Grades Matter

He found that academic success, however, had a greater influence on the likelihood that lower-income students would stay in college than it did for higher-income students. For each one-letter grade increase in their grade-point average, students from families with expected contributions of \$4,000 or less were 15 percent more likely to stay in college, he found. Students with an expected family contribution between \$4,000 and \$10,000 were 10 percent more likely to return for a second year for each one-letter grade rise in their grade-point average.

Students from higher-income families were only 7.5 percent more likely to persist in corresponding measurements, Mr. Herzog found.

Based on those findings, Mr. Herzog states in his study: "If freshman retention is an important institutional goal, a dual strategy that emphasizes academic success for low-income students coupled with greater financial assistance to higher-income students is estimated to maximize overall retention."

Why are students with fewer financial resources less influenced by the amount of aid they receive than their richer peers? Mr. Herzog said his findings were consistent with the "moral hazard" theory.

"Lower-income students get a large proportion of their aid in form of need-based grants that are not tied to academic performance and thus reduce the potential cost of failure," he explained in an e-mail message. "Conversely, high-income students have more of an investment risk because most of their aid is merit-based," and they may lose that aid "in the event of academic failure."

Despite his findings, Mr. Herzog was careful to say that he was not suggesting that colleges should reduce aid amounts for low-income students. Rather, he proposes that in lieu of increasing aid in the form of grants for those students, colleges should allocate that money to improving academic-support services. That would be a more effective way to improve the likelihood of retention among low-income students, he said.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 25, 2008

Despite Fading Economy, 2008 Outlook for Colleges Is Stable, Analysts Say

By GOLDIE BLUMENSTYK

The immediate financial picture for American higher education is stable despite signs that the economy is weakening, according to the two largest agencies that rate college bonds.

Even with that generally positive view, Moody's Investors Service cites several factors that could spell longer-term problems — most notably rising public scrutiny of colleges' financial practices.

The report, "2008 U.S. Higher Education Outlook," also warns that some colleges in the Northeast and Midwest may be in jeopardy because of their failure to adjust to projected declines in the numbers of high-school graduates in their regions. Trustees of such colleges need to do a better job of questioning administrators about "realistic expectations for enrollment trends," the report says.

Standard & Poor's, in its outlook for 2008, says colleges that are financially secure will remain so. Still, colleges are likely to face increasing challenges because investment returns may be lower, while costs for energy, insurance, and borrowing are expected to go up.

Standard & Poor's adds that some public colleges may find that their state appropriations are reduced or increase at a slower-than-expected pace.

Moody's, in its report, suggests that the ways most public colleges are governed are out of date, in light of the greater role private money plays at those institutions. That shift, along with the more-competitive environment in which public institutions now operate, says the agency, "demand a much different skill set and time commitment from board members than before."

Whether public or private, Moody's says, colleges will need to operate more efficiently because "political pressure and economic constraints" will limit their ability to continue to increase tuition at rates exceeding inflation, as they have for the past 25 years.

Those tuition increases, coupled with strong philanthropic support and robust investment returns, have been a boon to colleges for the past several years.

In 2007, Standard & Poor's upgraded the bond ratings of four colleges for every one that it downgraded. At Moody's the ratio was about three upgrades for every downgrade.

Regional Variations

Moody's warns in its report that colleges are going to have to adjust to a shifting population in their core market.

While the number of high-school graduates is projected to increase by 5 percent from 2004 to 2017, that figure is far lower than the 24-percent increase during the previous 12 years. In the Southeast and Southwest, where the growth will be the greatest, colleges will need to prepare for the influx by increasing their facilities and faculties.

At the same time, the report says, colleges in other regions are not planning adequately for the likely declines in student numbers that they will soon be facing.

The Moody's report also urges colleges to make clear to the public how they use their endowments, set tuition, and award financial aid, the report says. It also urges colleges to consider developing and disclosing "more consistent measurable indicators of quality and efficiency," such as graduation rates, endowment-spending rates, and financial-aid criteria.

At a time of increased calls for accountability, recommendations for such measures have a familiar ring. The Internal Revenue Service and the Congressional Budget Office are just two of several federal agencies scrutinizing colleges on those issues, and a key Republican lawmaker has discussed setting a minimum spending rate for large endowments.

Moody's says those actions are just a few signs of bigger changes in the works, "with federal and state policy making, as well as political pressure, playing a much more significant role in the strategic planning and financial operations of higher-education institutions."

The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 25, 2008

Colleges Brace for Cuts as State Economies Take a Turn for the Worse

By SARA HEBEL

This was supposed to have been the "year of education" in California, a designation proclaimed last year by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger as he looked ahead to 2008.

But, like his counterparts in many states, the Republican governor finds himself entering the new year facing a budget gap. California's revenues are flat-lining, in part because of the slumping housing market, and are expected to fall \$14.5-billion short of the state's costs over the next 18 months.

Educators who had hoped "their" year might come with spending increases now face cuts. Mr. Schwarzenegger has proposed slashing the budgets of all state agencies, including the University of California and California State University, by 10 percent.

Those institutions would receive some increases for their basic operations and to cover costs of some enrollment growth, but university administrators warn that the reductions would still limit the number of students they could accommodate. They would also lead to higher tuition, with the governor's budget assuming an increase of at least 7 percent at the University of California and 10 percent at Cal State for the 2008-9 academic year.

Beyond spending cuts, Mr. Schwarzenegger has called for budget reforms and proposed suspending the financing guarantees of Proposition 98, which sets a minimum level of state support for community colleges and public schools.

Across the country, many other states are also beginning to struggle to make ends meet. In the third quarter of last year, which ended in September, state tax revenues dropped from the previous year when adjusted for inflation for the first time in four years, according to a report released last week by the State University of New York's Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.

The lackluster housing market, in particular, has strained the budgets of about half the states, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, which notes that the effects have been particularly harsh in California, Florida, and Nevada.

At the same time revenues are taking a hit, the costs of Medicaid, health care, and other state programs are escalating, further squeezing state finances. Faced with gaps, state officials are proposing reductions in appropriations for next year and considering midyear cuts in current budgets. Among the states considering midyear cuts are California, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, and Nevada, according to the state-colleges group.

A Jarring Shift

The change of fortune may be especially jarring to college officials after a year in which state appropriations for higher education saw their biggest annual increase in more than two decades. State-tax support for higher education climbed 7.5 percent, to \$77.5-billion, in the 2007-8 budget year, the fourth year in a row of growth, according to the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University.

As they face proposed cuts, higher-education officials in many states are fighting back. In Kentucky, for instance, leaders of the state's eight public universities, the community- and technical-college system, and the state association of private colleges sent a letter to their new governor, Steven L. Beshear, warning of dire consequences if the cuts he has asked them to plan for take effect.

The governor, a Democrat who campaigned last fall on a pledge to put college within reach of more Kentuckians, asked the state's institutions to outline how they would absorb a 15-percent cut in their budgets over the next two years, given that the state faces a budget gap of \$430-million.

The higher-education officials told the governor his plan would cause "immeasurable damage," requiring them to cut academic programs, lay off faculty and staff members, and limit enrollment growth. The leaders also said such deep cuts would stall the state's progress toward reaching the goals of an aggressive reform plan Kentucky put in place a decade ago that seeks to sharply raise the state's college-going rates.

In some states, governors have sought to protect higher education, or even proposed new sources of funds for colleges, even as they work to balance budgets.

In New York, which faces a \$4-billion deficit, Gov. Eliot Spitzer, a Democrat, floated the possibility of partially privatizing the state's lottery in order to finance a new endowment he wants to create for the state's public universities. He proposed using the endowment to add 2,000 faculty members to the institutions.

Virginia's governor, Timothy M. Kaine, proposed issuing \$1.65-billion in bonds to pay for construction and renovation projects at the state's colleges, which he said would help advance research and further colleges' roles in work-force development. The governor, a Democrat, is grappling with a budget deficit of \$618.3-million but said that "if we want to make sure that Virginia's economy remains strong in the future, we must make strategic investments in higher-education capacity and research."

That economic argument for protecting spending on higher education seems to be resonating more and more with governors and state lawmakers, says Daniel J. Hurley, director of state relations and policy analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Compared with five years ago, the last time appropriations for higher education fell from the previous year, state lawmakers now seem to be even more reluctant to turn to college budgets' first when they are looking for places to make cuts, he says.

When state leaders face tough budget choices, Mr. Hurley says, "this time around, higher education might take precedence."

The Chronicle of Higher Education

From the issue dated February 1, 2008

POLITICS@EDU

Colleges Emerge the Clear Winner in the Battle Over Accreditation

By PAUL BASKEN

If the accreditation battles of the past year had been a boxing match, the referees probably would declare American colleges the winner by a technical knockout.

The latest example is the victory the colleges have secured in a fight with accreditors themselves over proposed legislative language. The outcome appears to have removed the institutions' last major obstacle to asserting their right to define academic success.

The skirmish began last summer, when a provision colleges favor was included in the U.S. Senate's bill to renew the Higher Education Act. The language would make it clear the Education Department cannot use federal accreditation to create requirements for evaluating colleges.

Accrediting agencies fought back. They persuaded members of the House of Representatives to remove that language from their version of the bill, by arguing that the Senate proposal would give the colleges too much power.

Now, after weeks of intensive negotiations, the colleges and the accreditors have reached a settlement. The result? They agreed to take the general approach of the Senate bill, giving colleges the authority to set the terms of their own academic evaluations.

The compromise language does give the accreditors the right to suggest some measures, like faculty qualifications or student test results, by which the colleges will be judged. But, according to participants in the talks, the new language also makes clear that in the case of disagreements, the colleges would retain final authority.

Both houses of Congress, of course, still have to formally adopt that language as they craft a final version of the Higher Education Act renewal. But Congress already made clear last year that it stands firmly alongside the colleges on accreditation matters. Lawmakers forced Education Secretary Margaret Spellings to retreat from writing new regulations intended to cement her department's authority over accreditation. Members of both the House and the Senate also included language in each chamber's versions of the Higher Education Act that would end the department's authority over the agency responsible for reviewing accreditor performance.

Neither college officials nor accrediting-agency representatives want to talk on the record about their negotiations over the bill's language and their agreement to let colleges define their own measures of academic success.

But Charles Miller, chairman of the Bush administration's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, sees the result as a clear loss for the campaign to improve the quality of American colleges, as the peace agreement is likely to end any remaining hope that Congress might give the Education Department the right to dictate standards.

Accreditation was created by colleges as a system of voluntary self-improvement. The federal government later adopted the process by establishing its own accrediting standards and then allowing students to receive federal aid only if they attend a college that is endorsed by an approved accreditor.

Mr. Miller's commission recommended in September 2006 that the government use that federally required accreditation to set even tougher standards for colleges. The change is necessary, the panel concluded, because too many colleges are providing a low quality of education and don't give students and taxpayers an objective method of evaluating academic performance.

Colleges might eventually face real pressure to change when states realize they are permitting a form of accreditation that is dominated by six regional agencies, which leaves the colleges largely unaccountable for how they spend state money, he said.

"The governors are going to wake up one day," Mr. Miller said, "and say, 'What are these people in Atlanta and Chicago and those places doing telling me what my institution should do? We own them.'"

Mr. Miller's hopes for an awakening by states are rising as his allies in the federal government appear to be backing off. For the past several years, the Education Department has asserted its right under existing federal law to set college-performance standards in a variety of areas, including student achievement, curriculum, facilities, and financial security. As the debate over that has worn on, however, Ms. Spellings has made increasingly clear her willingness to let colleges set the terms.

All colleges should be allowed to "describe their own unique missions" and be judged against that, the secretary said in December at the National Press Club in Washington.

"That is," she said, "totally within the jurisdiction of each institution."

CSU told 'civility' demand is too vague

Trustees will review campus conduct rule

By Sherry Saavedra
STAFF WRITER

January 21, 2008

In a society that some say doesn't value manners, administrators at San Diego State University and Cal State San Marcos are being told they can't punish students for not being "civil."

California State University trustees will consider a revision to a section of the student conduct code Wednesday that includes an expectation that students be "civil." The change would make it more clear that disciplinary action for "uncivil" conduct is not allowed.

A Northern California court recently ruled the term is too broad.

"The court told us we could not base discipline on civility . . . There is a certain lack of precision to that word," said Christine Helwick, general counsel for CSU.

The policy affects students at 23 CSU campuses, including SDSU and Cal State San Marcos.

That's not to say that students will be permitted to shove someone out of the way while rushing to class. Helwick said students can be disciplined for specific acts of incivility laid out in the conduct code, such as lewd or obscene behavior.

Helwick said it was never the CSU's intention to discipline students for the more general charge of "incivility." She said the revision will make it "abundantly clear."

"We thought it was clear before," Helwick said.

A federal district judge in Oakland didn't. At a November hearing, U.S. Magistrate Wayne Brazil said that a university can say it hopes students will be "civil," but it can't hold a punishment over their heads if they're not. Brazil granted a preliminary injunction, barring the CSU from basing disciplinary proceedings on incivility.

The ruling stemmed from a lawsuit brought by a student organization at San Francisco State University, the College Republicans, after they were investigated for incivility during an anti-terrorism rally.

At the 2006 rally, students stomped on signs with Hamas and Hezbollah flags displaying the name "Allah." Some students were offended. And a university administrator notified the group that it was accused of acts of incivility. That triggered a formal disciplinary investigation.

A panel ultimately dismissed the charge, but the students challenged the word "civil" in the conduct code as too broad. If left in place, they believed it could discourage future protected speech.

CSU argued that the civility provision could not be reasonably interpreted as a basis for disciplinary action.

Brazil disagreed, partly because the preceding sentence threatened possible consequences for violations of the conduct code.

"Requiring students to be civil might well require students to forsake the means for communication that are most likely to be effective," according to Brazil's written opinion.

The civility case is pending.

CSU is not proposing to eliminate the statement on consequences, but rather move it so that it precedes a list of specific behaviors that are grounds for discipline.

David Hacker, an attorney with the nonprofit Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal group representing the College Republicans, said CSU's proposed remedy still jeopardizes First Amendment rights. The civility statement should be removed, he said.

"I think the court wanted them to strike it from their policy," Hacker said.

"I don't know what it means to be uncivil. It could mean one thing to one person, something else to another and something else to an administrator and capture a lot of protected speech under its wing."

Some education policy watchdog groups say these types of broad "speech codes" are all too common on college campuses nationwide and were created mostly in the 1980s and 1990s as students became increasingly diverse.

According to the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, 75 percent of 346 colleges surveyed nationwide explicitly prohibit speech that is protected by the First Amendment.

"Universities are not respecting the marketplace of ideas and are censoring student speech with policies like the (CSU) one," Hacker said.

SDSU Student President James Poet said asking students to be civil is rather vague. But students shouldn't need a threat of punishment hanging over their heads to be well-mannered.

"I'd hope students would want to be civil to each other . . . Isn't that anybody's wish?"