



EL CAMINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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

August 14, 2008

Board of Trustees
El Camino College

Dear Members of the Board:

By now you should have enrolled in classes, paid your fees, purchased your books, acquainted yourself with the campus and prepared for the start of the fall semester. Most likely, however, you are staying up late watching the Olympics. Students, ready yourself—school starts soon.

The Monday, August 18, Board meeting is the beginning of a significant week of fall activities with new faculty orientation day on Tuesday, Flex Day at El Camino College and Compton Center on Thursday and an additional Compton Center Flex Day on Friday. Saturday classes begin on August 23rd and on the next Monday, August 25th. Both locations will be excited by scores of students.

The August Board public agenda is remarkably routine. In fact, what is not on the agenda, but will be distributed, is probably more important, that is, the 2008-09 Final Budget.

Please note we will have an open house for you, the Board members, at 3:30 p.m. in our new Central Plant. Carts will be outside my office for transportation. I encourage you to participate and view the engine that drives the heating, ventilation and cooling operations of the campus. Please inform Kathy of your attendance.

The following items are enclosed for your review:

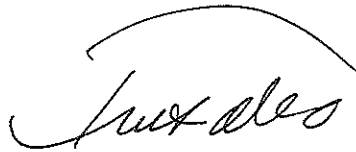
1. "Los Angeles Southwest College is put on Probation," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 2008;
2. "Los Rios College District Puts Bond Measure on November Ballot," *Sacramento Bee*, August 12, 2008;
3. "Board Likely to Seek School Funding," *Daily Breeze*, August 3, 2008;

4. "School Bonds Head to Ballot," *Daily Breeze*, August 5, 2008;
5. "Centinela Bonds Get Last Chance," *Daily Breeze*, August 6, 2008;
6. "Daniel Weintraub: Despite Appearances, Budget Deal Draws Closer," *Sacramento Bee*, July 30, 2008;
7. "Budget Compromise Remains Elusive," *SignOnSanDiego.com*, July 21, 2008;
8. "Build It And It Will Come: Furniture Making Class," *Apartment Therapy.com*, July 22, 2008, along with press release Association of Woodworking and Furnishings Suppliers;
9. "What's Closed, Delayed After Quake," *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 2008;
10. "Two Mt. SAC Students Injured in Earthquake," *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, July 29, 2008;
11. "Financial Aid Limits Can Be Roadblock," *USA Today*, July 24, 2008;
12. "The Price of an Education is Likely to be Debt," *USA Today*, July 24, 2008;
13. "Colleges Need to Offer Clear Paths to Leadership," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 18, 2008;
14. "Three Years Into Fight for Accountability, Spellings Again Seeking Traction," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 18, 2008;
15. "Spellings Campaign Runs Low On Time and Power to Persuade," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 21, 2008;
16. "Turning Point Arrives as U. S. Community Colleges' Purview Grows," *USA Today*, July 23, 2008;
17. "Colleges Need to Offer Clear Paths to Leadership," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 18, 2008;
18. "Keeping Clickers in the Classroom," *InsideHigherEd.com*, July 18, 2008;
19. "Going to the Xtreme," *InsideHigherEd.com*, July 31, 2008;
20. Letter to Legislators regarding the State Budget, July 24, 2008;

21. Memo from Daniel G. Villanueva, Secretary, Los Angeles County Office of Education, regarding Nominations for Membership to the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization, July 31, 2008;
22. Memo from Barbara Perez responding to questions of the Board at the July 2008 meeting;
23. Passport to Discovery, 2008-2009;
24. El Camino College Center for the Arts 2008-2009 program schedule;
25. City of Inglewood, District 4 Beacon, July 2008;
26. Torrance Magazine, August 2008.

We are all excited with the start of a new academic year. I look forward to greeting you in my office at 3 p.m. prior to the Central Plant Open House. In the meantime, please contact Kathy Oswald or me if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tom Fallo", with a large, sweeping arch over the name.

Thomas M. Fallo
Superintendent/President

TMF/kao

Cc: Vice Presidents, Provost, Director of Community Relations

LA Times.com

Los Angeles Southwest College is put on probation

District officials call the move by the regional accrediting agency 'an overreaction' and 'completely unprecedented.'

By Jeff Gottlieb, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
August 3, 2008

Los Angeles Southwest College has been placed on probation by the regional accrediting agency, an action local college officials call unwarranted.

Mark Drummond, chancellor of the nine-college Los Angeles Community College District, said Friday that the move by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges "was an overreaction. We think this is a strong institution."

Jack Daniels, president of Southwest, and Gary Colombo, the district vice chancellor of institutional effectiveness, are scheduled to fly to Novato in Northern California on Aug. 18 to plead their case with the head of the commission.

"It's completely unprecedented to put a college on probation where there was no previous indication the college was in trouble," Colombo said. "We're still completely perplexed why the college was singled out."

Commission officials declined to discuss the findings.

Daniels was appointed president of the two-year school in May. He had served as interim president since August 2006.

Drummond said Daniels was not to blame. "He's done a very good job as far as moving ahead on lot of different fronts," he said.

Daniels was on vacation and could not be reached for comment.

The accrediting commission placed Southwest on probation at its June 4-6 meeting. Students are not directly affected when a college is placed on probation.

Colombo said probation was primarily given to colleges that failed to respond to accreditors' recommendations from previous visits.

"Clearly, that is not the case with Southwest," he said.

The two-year college has been on probation before, in the late 1990s, Drummond said, "but

we've put a lot of time, money and effort into strengthening it."

Southwest opened in 1967, at Imperial Highway and Western Avenue, just east of Inglewood. It began with 600 students and now has about 7,000.

Among the criticisms by the accreditation commission was that Southwest had not responded to the increase of Latinos in the district, Colombo said.

"We felt the college was making serious progress, but it's being faulted," he said.

According to the college, about a third of its students are Latino and about two-thirds are African American.

If a college on probation does not resolve the problems, the commission can begin the process of taking away its accreditation.

When a college loses its accreditation, its degrees are not recognized by other institutions in the state and it cannot award financial aid, Colombo said.

Colombo said no other colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District are on probation.

The last two-year college in Southern California to have its accreditation pulled was Compton Community College, which was taken over by the state in 2004 and has become a satellite of El Camino College in Torrance.

SacBee.com

Los Rios college district puts bond measure on November ballot

By Bill Lindelof - blindelof@sacbee.com

Published 12:00 am PDT Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Between a rock and hard times, the Los Rios Community College District has placed a \$475 million bond measure on the November ballot.

"Enrollment is growing far faster than any of us could have imagined it would," said Brice Harris, chancellor of the Los Rios system.

Faced with rocketing growth, the community college district – which spans Sacramento, Yolo and El Dorado counties, as well as parts of Placer – is asking taxpayers for money to build and remodel campus buildings.

The question is whether voters, facing an uncertain job market and rising prices for food, gas and other staples, will be receptive to the proposal, called Measure M. The measure requires a 55 percent approval rate for passage. If approved, it requires property owners in the district to pay \$9.10 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation.

Earlier this year, San Juan Unified School District officials decided not to pursue a bond measure, citing the rough economic conditions.

A recently released report added to the gloomy outlook: The Sacramento Regional Research Institute said job losses in the region quickened in June, resulting in a steeper decline than the state and national average.

Harris said Monday that Los Rios leaders understand times are tough. In fact, pocketbook issues are a prime reason community college enrollment is up, as young and old seek job training — and retraining.

"We have a commanding need and we would not be doing our job if we did not present this to the voters," said Harris.

This fall, about 88,000 students will enroll in the Los Rios college system, which includes American River, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake and Sacramento City colleges. That's 4,000 more students than enrolled last fall, a 5 percent rise – and part of a steady increase. Last fall's enrollment was 9 percent higher than fall 2006; and fall 2006 enrollment was up 8 percent over 2005.

Los Rios estimates that one out of every 12 adults in the Sacramento region is enrolled at a community college.

Cost is also a factor in the burgeoning enrollment. The per unit fee at community colleges has remained steady at \$20, while California State University and University of California fees have risen.

The Los Rios district last passed a bond measure in 2002, when voters approved a \$265 million package. During that bond campaign, Los Rios leaders told voters that they expected 100,000 students by 2015. The state now projects 120,000 by 2016.

8/5/08

School board likely to seek funds for campus improvements

By Gene Maddaus, Staff Writer

The Torrance Unified School District is gearing up to ask residents for \$355 million to pay for remodeled athletic fields and repairs to its dilapidated school buildings.

At a special meeting Monday night, the school board is expected to formally place two bond measures on the November ballot. The first, for \$265 million, would go toward repairs of the district's aging school buildings. The second, for \$90 million, would fund new music and art classrooms and upgrades to athletic fields.

To succeed, officials will have to persuade Torrance voters to break with their history of rejecting school bonds. In the last 11 years, voters have approved one bond measure in five tries.

The most recent failure, of the \$280 million Measure T in 2006, forced officials to close J.H. Hull Middle School and bus its students to a curriculum center two miles away.

Almost all of the district's 33 schools are in need of repairs. Officials have taken pains to document the leaky ceiling tiles and rusty bathroom fixtures at many of them.

But officials are facing a conservative electorate that may not trust the district to spend tax dollars wisely. Some longtime district critics have indicated they will do what they can to oppose the bond measures.

"We know they're going to fight us tooth and nail," said Mike Ernst, president of the school board. "There's a pretty vocal group of anti-tax folks in Torrance that we have to contend with, and we really have to battle."

In the 60-year history of the district, voters have approved one bond measure, Measure R, for \$42 million in 1998. Measure R passed on the fourth try, after officials pared it back from \$80 million.

Back then, school bonds required a two-thirds majority to succeed. The threshold has since been lowered to 55 percent, but Measure T failed to reach even that benchmark in 2006, falling short by 338 votes.

"I think the climate is worse than it was two years ago," said G. Rick Marshall, one of the district's most committed critics. "We're paying \$4 a gallon for gasoline. I don't see how you can sell the community on a bond that is going to tax us for the next 30 years."

Torrance residents are already paying \$19 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation to pay off Measure R. If both of the new bond measures are approved, homeowners will owe an extra \$48 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation.

School officials believe they will be successful this time around, in part because they have laid the groundwork with a series of community meetings, and in part because of higher voter turnout due to the presidential election.

Measure T was on a June primary ballot, with a turnout of about 33 percent. Turnout could be double that for a presidential election, drawing in younger, more liberal voters who might have school-age children and who would be more likely to support taxes for school infrastructure.

But Mayor Frank Scotto, a Republican, said he believes that the vast array of tax proposals on the November ballot might draw anti-tax voters to the polls.

"This is really the tax election of all time," he said. "People will be going to the polls on both sides of the issue."

Scotto supports the two measures, but said he wishes money had been earmarked for construction of new schools, rather than repairs to buildings that are 50 to 100 years old.

"I'm hoping this passes," he said. "But if it doesn't, I'm hoping maybe they'll listen to some of the ideas I have."

Ernst said that polls show residents are opposed to building new schools, which would be twice as costly as repairing existing ones.

The most recent poll shows the two measures passing, but just barely, with support in the high 50s.

WANT

TO GO?

What: The Torrance Unified School District Board of Education will hold a special meeting to discuss two bond measures for the November ballot.

Where: District headquarters, 2336 Plaza del Amo, Torrance.

When: 7 p.m. Monday. A closed-session meeting is at 6:45 p.m.

8/5/08

School bonds head to ballot

By Gene Maddaus, Staff Writer

The Torrance Unified school board voted unanimously Monday night to place two bond measures worth \$355 million on the November ballot.

The board also voted to create a repair fund that is intended to address voters' concerns that the bond-funded upgrades will not be well maintained.

Torrance voters rejected the last bond, the \$280 million Measure T, by a narrow margin in 2006.

This time, the board has decided to split the bond into two parts: a \$265 million measure to pay for renovation of dilapidated school buildings; and a \$90 million measure to build music rooms and science labs, and upgrade the athletic fields.

"These are things that neighboring South Bay kids enjoy," said Board Member Albert Muratsushi. "There is no reason why Torrance kids - with our middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods - should not enjoy the same kinds of facilities."

The district is forbidden from using taxpayer money to promote the bonds, so it will turn over the job of campaigning for them to a group of volunteers led by Board President Mike Ernst.

The volunteer committee is expected to raise more than \$150,000 to pay for political consultants and mailers to get both measures over the required 55 percent threshold.

Tramutola, a consulting firm based in Oakland, has already been retained to guide the district through the process. The firm has conducted polling that shows both measures succeeding, though narrowly, and has offered advice on how to split them up and what title to give them.

The district believes that splitting the bond gives voters greater input, increasing the likelihood that both measures will pass.

Neither measure has yet been given a letter name. The first, which is substantially similar to Measure T, would pay for significant but mundane upgrades to the district's aging infrastructure. The second would pay for improvements that would be more visible and accessible to the general public, like artificial turf at the high school athletic fields and all-weather tracks.

Officials say they added the second measure after hearing that community members wanted to see the fruits of their tax dollars.

If approved, the first bond would cost each Torrance homeowner \$35 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation per year. The second would cost \$13 per \$100,000.

The district pledged on Monday night to set aside 0.3 percent of its general fund budget each year to put into a maintenance fund. That amount could be up to \$600,000 a year over 10 years.

"It's an important feature we can put into this bond to show the community, 'We heard you last time, and we understand what your concerns are,'" said Board Member Don Lee in an interview before the vote.

G. Rick Marshall, one of the district's more vocal critics, questioned whether the fund was sufficient.

"I'm happy to see them make an attempt at it," he said. "But I'm not sure it's adequate."

Centinela bonds get last chance

Staff Writer

In a last-ditch effort to place a \$98 million bond measure on the November ballot, the embattled Centinela Valley Union High School District will hold a special board meeting on Thursday.

The board voted 3-1 for the measure on Monday, but it requires four yes votes to pass. Board member Rudy Salas dissented, and member Francisco Talavera was absent.

The bond measure would extend an existing annual tax of \$29.72 per \$100,000 of assessed property value an additional 25 years - through 2058. Without it, the district's outstanding bond will have incremental reductions each year, and end in 2033.

The deadline to place a measure on the ballot is Friday.

The beleaguered school district, which is facing a \$4 million deficit, has cut \$3.5 million in expenses since voters turned down a parcel tax proposal in June. Since then, the Los Angeles County Office of Education appointed an overseer to manage its finances.

Measure A received 56 percent of the vote in June, but needed a two-thirds vote to pass. But under provisions of Proposition 39, which was passed by California voters in 2000, the bond measure requires only a 55 percent vote.

"The critical issue for us was: How can we modernize the classrooms without increasing the tax rate?" interim Superintendent Jose Fernandez said. "I am concerned that the district will not be able to meet its educational needs without modernization. The classroom overcrowding is not good."

As part of a fiscal recovery plan, the district that runs Leuzinger, Hawthorne, Lawndale and R.K. Lloyd Continuation high schools has increased class size to a 39-to-1 ratio of students to teachers, along with reductions in staff and programming.

Salas said he voted against a bond measure because of the district's shoddy past.

"To ask our voters to carry our share when our history is what it is, is not fair," Salas said. "We haven't been transparent or accountable to the voters who will carry this until 2058. I can't vote for that."

Voters passed a \$59 million bond measure in 2000 that left the district with an unfinished and, according to many voters, unwanted performing arts center at Lawndale High and a new cafeteria at Hawthorne High that's been called "the Taj Mahal" of school lunchrooms.

Both projects quickly sparked an outcry among community members who felt the money could be better used elsewhere and worried more pressing projects would fall by the wayside.

If Talavera does not approve the bond measure on Thursday, the board may vote for another type of bond measure that requires only three yes votes to put it on the ballot, but would need two-thirds voter approval to pass.

The more restrictive bonds would allow spending only on facilities, not new computers or other equipment.

At the Monday meeting, John Clem, senior vice president of TELACU Construction Management of Los Angeles, presented a proposal for the bond money.

Clem said modular classrooms would be replaced by two-story buildings; classrooms would be modernized with new paint, desks, cabinets, floors, ceilings and desks; and science and computer labs, bathrooms and libraries would be upgraded.

"The actual scope of all of this will be defined after the bond has been passed, when we will go from a broad brush picture to specifics," Clem said.

The most pressing issue of antiquated, overcrowded facilities is the most critical, school board President Gloria Ramos said.

"I see the campuses, I worked there," Ramos said. "We won't get the improvements we need without this. This is the next route since we are cash-strapped. It makes sense to do it."

WANT TO GO?

What: Centinela Valley Union High School District Board of Education special meeting to vote on bond measures.

Where: District Board Room, 14901 S. Inglewood Ave., Lawndale.

When: 4 p.m. Thursday.

SacramentoBee.com

Daniel Weintraub: Despite appearances, budget deal draws closer

By Daniel Weintraub - dweintraub@sacbee.com

Published 12:00 am PDT Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Story appeared in MAIN NEWS section, Page A21

To the casual observer, the situation in Sacramento probably seems pretty bleak right now.

With the state facing a \$15 billion budget shortfall, Democrats and Republicans are a month overdue in getting a new spending plan in place.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is about to order a temporary pay cut for 200,000 state employees and wants to furlough thousands of others to preserve cash so the government can continue operating through September.

Legislative leaders, meanwhile, scheduled a Senate vote on a Democratic budget plan Tuesday, then abruptly canceled it.

But in the topsy-turvy world of state politics, these seemingly dark developments might actually signal that an agreement is near.

It used to be said that state leaders couldn't get a budget deal until the temperatures in the capital city topped 100 degrees. But since the coming of air conditioning, that maxim no longer holds. Now it's more accurate to say that the opposing sides won't agree until everybody watching them pretty much concludes that they are on the verge of a partisan meltdown.

In other words, they're getting close to a deal.

That's not the same as closing the deal. It's common for the party leaders to have the framework of an agreement, even an outline of a new budget plan, but then be stymied for days or even weeks over a disagreement on details or some unrelated issue that a few legislators want to include in the package in exchange for their vote.

But by listening to the legislative leaders talk and tapping into the chatter in the Capitol hallways, you can begin to sense what a new budget agreement might look like, whenever it comes. Here's my best guess:

- It is going to include some borrowing. That's not exactly going out on a limb, given the recent history of this governor and these legislators.

There is just no way they are going to close a \$15 billion gap with spending cuts and tax hikes alone. So expect some gimmicks.

Lawmakers, for instance, might find a way to tap into local government funds, despite a voter-approved initiative that makes that option more difficult than before. Also, the governor's proposal to borrow against future state lottery earnings, an idea he calls "a gift from the future," is still very much alive. I would not be surprised if a scaled-down version of the governor's plan emerged as part of this package.

- The final deal will include some tax increases. The worst-kept secret in the Capitol is that at least a handful of Republicans are prepared to accept some tax hikes in exchange for what they call "budget reform." The range of possible tax increases probably tracks with the seriousness of the reforms.

If Democrats were to accept a strict limit on future spending, which has been the Republicans' top priority, the majority party could probably get enough Republican votes to pass a sales tax increase. But the Democrats won't go there because such a limit would constrain the growth in government services during the next economic expansion.

If Democrats instead will accept only a strengthened rainy day reserve, Republicans will probably vote for nothing more than eliminating a few tax deductions.

The shape of that budget reform has been the subject of intense talks in recent weeks among all of the legislative leaders. Ultimately, the ball is in the Democrats' court. The stronger the limit on long-term spending they accept, the more tax revenue they are likely to get in the short term, and the fewer cuts they will have to make. Which brings us to the third piece of any deal.

- There will be some spending cuts, or at least some reductions from planned levels of spending. But it won't be clear how much will be trimmed until we know how much they will borrow and how big the tax increases will be.

The governor proposed essentially freezing education spending on a per-student basis, which would have meant service cuts for schools that had employee contracts driving up costs. With higher expenses but the same amount of money from the state, many of them would have had to lay off teachers. Schwarzenegger also proposed a 10 percent reduction in reimbursements to doctors who care for the poor, and he suggested denying a planned federal cost-of-living increase to the aged, blind and disabled who rely on public assistance to supplement their Social Security checks.

The Democrats, in their version of the budget, restored all of those cuts and more, and proposed paying for the added costs with about \$9 billion in tax increases on business and the wealthy. Republicans will almost certainly not vote for tax increases anywhere near that large, so something will have to give.

One other thing we can be fairly certain of at this point: The final package will not solve the state's fiscal problems. Even with tax increases and spending cuts, lawmakers and the governor will probably still be facing a potential deficit of billions of dollars when they convene in January, 2009 to do this dance all over again.

Budget compromise remains elusive

Legislators divided over tax hikes, spending cuts

By Ed Mendel
STAFF WRITER

July 21, 2008

SACRAMENTO – After seven years of deficits, lawmakers are talking about finding a way to reform a state budget that has been wallowing in borrowing and red ink for nearly all of this decade.

But they are miles apart. The political deadlock that created the deficits extends to reform: Republicans oppose tax increases, Democrats oppose spending cuts.

A suggestion by Republicans that they might agree to a tax increase in exchange for a spending limit and “rainy-day” reserve does not seem to be moving Democrats.

“We really need for them to say ‘yes’ to a spending cap, ‘yes’ to a ‘rainy-day’ fund, and then we can open up discussions on everything,” said Assembly Minority Leader Mike Villines, R-Clovis.

Villines said Republicans, who have signed a no-new-tax pledge, understand that Democratic acceptance of a spending limit would require a “significant compromise on our side,” such as ending some tax credits and exemptions.

Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, asked about trading a spending cap for a tax increase, said it depends on what kind of a cap.

“I don’t think you can just have a cap out there and think you have solved the problem,” Perata said, adding that other issues must be addressed. “That’s an illusion.”

The budget has been overdue since the fiscal year began July 1. The immediate problem for lawmakers is another big hole in the general fund budget.

Taxes are expected to yield \$94.5 billion, most of that – \$53.7 billion – from the income tax. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s budget plan would spend \$102 billion.

Schwarzenegger would close the hole with \$5 billion in lottery-backed bonds and by counting \$2 billion in tax revenue from the first quarter of next fiscal year.

The Democratic plan spends \$106 billion, providing \$2.3 billion more for schools and \$1.5 billion more for health and welfare programs. It is based on a \$9.7 billion tax package, including a \$5.6 billion tax increase for upper-income earners.

For the past seven years, budgets have used temporary sources to close the budget gap, which cover only one year and allow the deficit to reopen in the following year.

The big temporary revenue source was a \$15 billion deficit bond, Proposition 57, approved by voters in March 2004. The last of the bonds, \$3 billion, were spent this year to shrink the current budget hole.

A classic budget accounting maneuver that provides revenue for only one year is the governor's proposal to switch to "accrual" accounting, allowing tax revenue from July-September 2009 to be counted in the fiscal year that ends in June 2009.

Another source of temporary revenue: Raiding funds that normally go to local government and transportation. By wide margins, voters approved measures in 2004 and 2006, both labeled Proposition 1A, to curb the raids.

The Legislature persuaded irate local governments and transportation groups to drop much tougher initiatives by placing its own measures on the ballot.

Some Republican legislators, using provisions in the softer Proposition 1As, are talking about getting a "loan" of \$2.5 billion that would be paid off in three years, alarming local governments and transportation groups.

Republican legislators also are talking about taking unspent funds from actor-director Rob Reiner's decade-old Proposition 10, a tobacco tax to aid early-childhood development.

Some have even talked about issuing bonds paid off by redevelopment agencies scheduled to expire. The agencies would give property-tax revenue in exchange for an extension and a looser definition of "blighted" property to make obtaining land through eminent domain easier.

Legislators in both parties say the governor's proposal to issue \$15 billion in bonds paid off by increased lottery sales might provide revenue in the future, but is not a good way to help balance the budget.

The plan to increase lottery sales, now about half of the per-capita average in 40 other state lotteries, would have to be approved by voters in November. The sales tax would be increased if voters rejected the lottery plan.

Although at odds on many things, legislators in both parties are calling for long-term budget reform.

The chronic deficits began when tax revenue soared during the high-tech boom around 2000. About \$12 billion in temporary revenue was spent on programs and tax cuts, leaving a budget

hole when revenue returned to normal levels. It was an extreme example of the “boom-bust” cycle in recent decades.

Last August, a Perata letter to the governor and legislative leaders calling for creation of a budget revision panel went unheeded, overshadowed by legislative special sessions last fall on water and health care.

“There is no debate,” Perata wrote. “The state budget is fatally broken. We can no longer limp along from year to year. It’s time to fix the problem.”

Perata, among other things, pointed to “autopilot” spending required by several ballot initiatives and the need to make a decision defining the “core responsibilities of state government” and how to pay for them.

A school-funding guarantee narrowly approved by voters two decades ago, Proposition 98, and zealously enforced by powerful school groups, gives schools about 40 percent of the state general fund.

The measure would give schools about half of the tax increase proposed by Democrats. The increase would become part of the school-funding guarantee, automatically driving up spending in the future.

Schwarzenegger’s proposal to use \$5 billion in lottery bonds to help balance the new budget, and \$10 billion in lottery bonds to build a “rainy-day” reserve, is flexible revenue not covered by Proposition 98.

Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles, who took the post in May, wants to appoint a bipartisan commission to recommend a “modernization” of a tax structure, creating a broader and more stable revenue stream.

Much of the revenue currently comes from income taxes paid by the wealthy, which makes big swings as the economy grows and slows. Bass acknowledged that the Democratic plan to raise taxes on the wealthy could increase the swings.

Bass said the current budget crisis must be solved. She originally planned to appoint the tax commission in June, but decided to wait until a new budget is enacted.

“You can’t do both (a new budget and tax reform) at the same time, and you can’t do it in a thoughtful manner,” Bass said.

The spending limit proposed by Republican legislators is similar to the original version of the “Gann limit,” named after Paul Gann, one of the co-authors of the landmark Proposition 13 property-tax cut passed 30 years ago.

Proposition 4, the “Spirit of Thirteen,” limited state spending to the annual growth in population and inflation, like the new Republican plan, and it’s still on the books.

The Gann limit was loosened in 1990 by Proposition 111, a gasoline-tax increase backed by business groups and then-Gov. George Deukmejian, a Republican, to aid highways and transit.

The Gann limit is now based on the annual growth in population and per-capita income. It is roughly \$12 billion above the current level of general fund spending, Republican legislative aides said.

Schwarzenegger is making a third attempt to get a spending limit. Democratic legislators rejected his proposal shortly after he took office in 2003. Voters rejected another proposal in 2005.

The governor's new plan, promoted across the state for months, would limit spending to the average revenue growth during the previous decade, currently around 5 percent.

"Look, I cut to the chase," Schwarzenegger said last week. "I know what the Democrats like, and I know what the Republicans like. So, I say let's meet somewhere in the middle. You know, the Republicans like a tight cap, and the Democrats don't like a cap."

Apartment Therapy.com

July 22, 2008 02:35PM

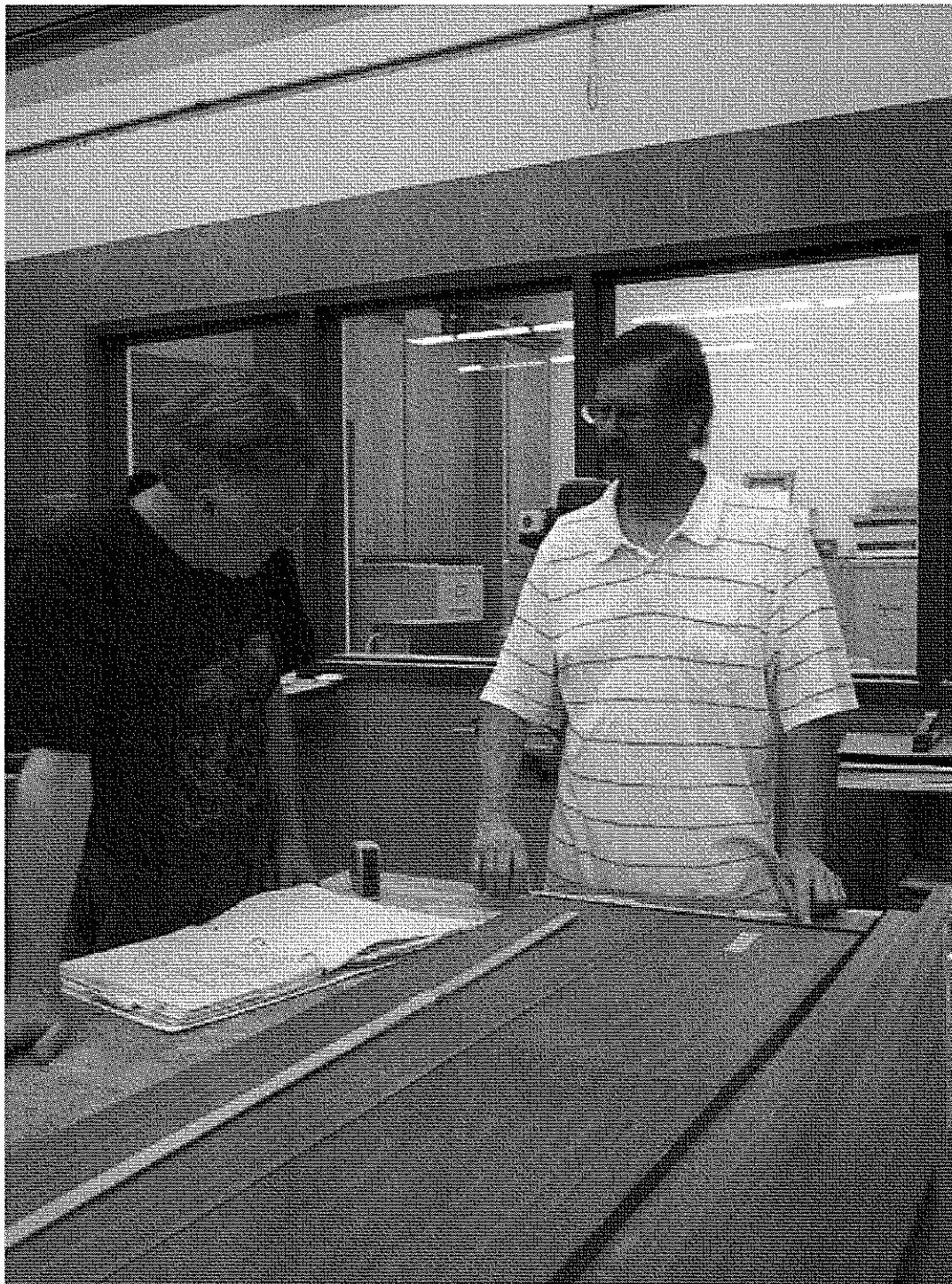
Build It And It Will Come: *Furniture Making Class*



If you're like us and have always had a secret desire to be George Nakashima , or maybe at one time just had a "I-could-totally-build-that-myself" moment while furniture shopping, then you might want to take some good notes."



El Camino College in Torrance offers a little-known, but wonderful cabinet and furniture-making class for all ability levels. This is a great place for a true beginner who just wants to work on being a Renaissance (wo)man or those looking to hone their woodworking skills. Whether you're a hobbyist or you've never held a drill before, long time professor Jack Selph will guide you effortlessly thru your apprenticeship with the patience of Ghandi, while showing you step-by-step how to build the projects of your choice. Don't be afraid, his lovely nature and dry wit will make any novice feel comfortable. If necessary, Jack and his fantastic teaching assistant John will hold your hand. Bring in an idea and they will help you figure out a plan, select your materials, and safely teach you to operate the tools necessary to create your masterpiece. The class has an enormous woodshop at your disposal, complete with every power tool you'll ever need. You can even purchase wood for your project in the shop.



Classes with lab time are offered weekdays and Saturdays for an affordable \$20 per unit. It's so easy, you have no excuse but to unleash your inner-woodworker. It's a fantastic way to satisfy that creative thirst and introduce you to a lifelong hobby. But be careful, tools are addicting and you might just be inspired to turn your garage into the *New Yankee Workshop*.
-Sabrina

FurnitureToday.com

AWFS chapter offers internships

-- *Furniture Today*, 8/4/2008 7:01:00 AM

Students can work in Southern California

CITY OF COMMERCE, Calif. — College students taking courses in woodworking, furniture design or manufacturing can apply for full- and part-time internships with industry companies located in Southern California, improving their career opportunities on graduation, according to the Assn. of Woodworking and Furnishings Suppliers.

The program has been initiated by the Young Furniture Associates, a chapter of the AWFS, a trade association representing companies that supply the home and commercial furnishings industry.

El Camino College in Torrance, Calif., offers students three credits for the internship. Cerritos College, Long Beach City College and Los Angeles Trade Tech College are considering similar support.

Companies interested in providing an internship must become a member of AWFS or the Young Furniture Associates. Any company in the woodworking, upholstery, bedding or related industries is eligible. For more information regarding membership, contact AWFS at (800) 946-2937.

For more information on the internship program or to obtain an application, companies and students can go to the association's Web site at www.awfs.org.

LA TIMES

What's closed, delayed after quake

Amtrak service is delayed as tracks are inspected. Some colleges cancel classes for the day. Disneyland briefly shuts, examines rides. Pomona City Hall is closed.

2:52 PM PDT, July 29, 2008

Amtrak

Amtrak spokesperson Vernae Graham said the passenger line has imposed speed restrictions for its trains between Orange County and Moorpark because of track inspections by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Co. The inspections are standard procedure following an earthquake. The maximum speed for Amtrak trains traveling through that area is 79 mph, but it has been reduced to between 25 and 40 mph for the inspections.

Graham said the restrictions have delayed at least three Surfliner trains as much as 22 minutes.

Cal State Fullerton

Cal State Fullerton closed for the day at 12:30 p.m. after reports of cracks and broken windows in older buildings on campus, said spokeswoman Paula Selleck. There did not appear to be any structural damage but teams were evaluating all the buildings at the school, she said. Two reports of the smell of gas were also being evaluated, she said. "We haven't had any panicking or any injuries," she said.

The satellite campus in Irvine at the old El Toro Marine Corps base remained open, she said. The school was in summer session, when the fewest number of students were on campus, the spokeswoman said.

Disneyland

Rides at Disneyland and California Adventure were temporarily shut down after the tremors. Under the park's normal safety procedures, a spokesman said, after a "moderate earthquake," each individual ride is shut down and tested before being brought back into operation.

Pomona City Hall

Pomona City Hall closed. Workers surveyed the damage, mostly broken glass. On the northern side of the building's third floor, workers used a shovel to scrape away what little glass remained from a large rectangular window.

Baldwin Park

The earthquake caused some delays in scheduled surgeries at Kaiser Permanente's Baldwin Park hospital and left a cosmetic crack in one of the walls, said spokesman Jim Anderson.

Community colleges

Classes were canceled Tuesday at two community colleges near the quake's epicenter.

Some 6,000 students are enrolled in summer session at Citrus College in Glendora, 17 miles from Chino Hills. All classes have been canceled until facilities workers can inspect the campus and its buildings, said college spokeswoman Paula Green.

At Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, about six miles from the epicenter, classes were also canceled for the day but were scheduled to resume on Wednesday, according to the school's website.

Raging Waters

At Raging Waters in San Dimas, about 10 miles from the epicenter, General Manager Doran Carrell said about 3,000 park guests were evacuated from pools and slides as soon as the earth stopped shaking. Maintenance and aquatics crews re-inspected rides and everything resumed normal operation less than an hour later.

"I think everyone was pretty cool," Carrell said. "We had a few people trying to call and check on their family and our phones did go down. The park's tallest slide, the 10-story High Extreme, "shook pretty good, but nobody was injured," he said.

Courthouses

Los Angeles County Superior Court spokesman Allan Parachini said courthouses across the county were evacuated after the earthquake but there were no reports of significant problems. He said the Pomona courthouse, the closest L.A. County court facility to the epicenter, was closed as officials checked for damage but would possibly reopen. Parachini said there was reported structural damage at the El Monte courthouse, leading to its closure for the remainder of the day. Long Beach also would remain closed because of ongoing problems with the facility that could have been exacerbated by the shaking. Elevators at the airport courthouse were not working, which if not fixed would lead to its closure for the remainder of the day.

Brea Civic Center

Several hundred city employees at the Brea Civic and Cultural Center were evacuated when ceiling tiles fell from the ceiling, said Brea Police Lt. Jim Tibbetts.

Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace

About 25 visitors were in the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace when the earthquake started shaking shelves and cases in the museum. The quake rattled some chandeliers, causing some

crystal to fall to the floor. The shaking also caused some display cases in the museum to move and some plaster on the walls to drop, said Tim Naftali, director of the library. The visitors and museum staff were evacuated.

The museum was shut down for the rest of the day while structural engineers inspected the building to make sure there was no permanent damage, Naftali said. He is not sure when the museum will reopen.

2 Mt. SAC students injured in earthquake

By Jennifer McLain and Emma Gallegos, Staff Writers

Article Launched: 07/29/2008 10:49:50 PM PDT

WALNUT - Two students suffered minor injuries and as many as 40 buildings sustained damage when Tuesday's temblor rolled through the campus of Mount San Antonio College.

The college, about 15 miles northwest of the quake's epicenter below Chino Hills, remained closed late Tuesday following the 11:42 a.m. quake. As many as 2,500 students were evacuated, officials said.

The campus is expected to reopen today, spokeswoman Jill Dolan said.

"We are doing a complete assessment of the buildings," said Virginia Burly, vice president of instruction. "We are calling in state agents to inspect the facilities."

Inspectors from the Division of the State Architect walked through the nearly 100 buildings on campus to determine whether they could be reopened.

The campus bookstore, the SAC Book Rac, sustained the most visible damage. Several ceiling tiles fell to the ground, and books, picture frames and shot glasses fell off the shelves and shattered.

Students were on campus Tuesday preparing for finals. Several elementary and middle school students were also at the school for a summer program.

Jessica Felix, a proctor for the program, said that the students were about to exit the classroom when the earthquake struck.

After the initial jolt, the students ran back under their desks and waited for the quake to finish.

Felix was in the nearby workout room, and said there was a moment of silence while everyone waited for the quake to finish.

After the earthquake, two college students reported minor injuries, one of whom had to be taken to a local hospital, Dolan said.

There, the 19-year-old was treated for a cut above her eye.

The other victim reported a minor injury, but was not sent to the hospital.

Later in the afternoon, about 50 people were asked to evacuate an administrative building because of an overheated electrical panel, said Jeff Parker, director of public safety at Mt. SAC.

"It is unclear whether it was a result of the earthquake," Parker said.

The evacuation occurred about 4:45 p.m., and authorities initially believed the smell to be a natural gas leak.

"There was a nasty odor, and police asked us to leave the building," Dolan said.

Nearby, at Cal Poly Pomona, the campus remained open except for the Classroom/Library/Administration (CLA) building - the modern, triangular building that defines the 1,438-acre campus.

"We wanted to err on the side of safety," said Pomona spokesperson Uyen Mai.

A seismic specialist, who was called in to assess any cosmetic damage, pronounced the building safe by afternoon.

Officials expect the campus to remain open, officials said.

USA Today

July 24, 2008

Financial aid limits can be roadblock

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY

Community colleges pride themselves on being the best bargains in higher education, yet affordability remains a barrier for many low- and moderate-income students.

Tuition, though it's rising faster than inflation, isn't the main culprit. At \$2,361, last year's average community college cost was just 38% of what public four-year universities charged, says the non-profit College Board, which tracks annual tuition increases. Bigger factors:

- **Costs related to going to college.** The College Board says the average budget for community college undergraduates last year was \$13,126, and more than 80% went toward transportation, books and supplies, room and board and other expenses such as child care.
- **Financial aid eligibility.** State and federal aid tends to be geared toward full-time, traditional college students, says Amy-Ellen Duke of the non-profit Center for Law & Social Policy in Washington. And most community college students don't qualify for federal tax credits and deductions, which generally benefit higher-income families attending high-tuition schools.
- **Awareness of aid.** A recent study by the non-profit Project on Student Debt found that two-thirds of community college students don't apply for financial aid, about twice as many as students at public and private universities. A report released in May by the federal Student Advisory Committee for Financial Assistance says reasons vary, but many students "just don't think they qualify, or they're intimidated" by the process, says David Baime of the American Association of Community Colleges.

The federal advisory committee is exploring how to encourage more students to apply and plans to report findings this fall. A federal financial aid law enacted last year could ease some of the burden on working students. And some states, including Illinois, Maryland and North Carolina, have improved efforts to help community college students access aid.

A report in May by the federal advisory committee projects a lack of money will prevent up to 3.2 million college-qualified high school graduates from earning a bachelor's degree. Low-income students — and especially those who start at two-year schools — are most at risk.

USA Today

July 24, 2008

The price of an education is likely to be debt

FAYETTE, Ala. — When Elisha McKinney graduated this spring from Bevill State Community College, she became the first in her family to earn a college degree. Now, as she takes online summer classes toward a bachelor's degree, she marks another first that she hopes also will be her last: She took out a student loan.

"I did everything I had to" to avoid borrowing money, says McKinney, 34, a married mother of three who worked full time while also a full-time student. "I'm nervous."

That sentiment is typical here in the Appalachia Mountain foothills, where many students are "raised to be very cautious about going into debt," says Neal Morrison, interim president of Bevill State.

But as the costs associated with going to college have increased, loans have gotten harder to avoid. The number of Bevill State borrowers is still small: less than 3% of students last year. But it has climbed steadily, from zero in 2001 to 148 in 2006.

That trend line is creating a dilemma for Morrison and other community college presidents, who have long preferred students not take on debt. Like many two-year colleges, Bevill State has opted out of a federal loan program.

The American Association of Community Colleges, which represents 1,200 two-year institutions, says most colleges that don't participate in the program base the decision on "overwhelming concern for the serious consequences of debt and default for students." Of particular concern are students who take remedial classes, for whom dropout — and default — rates tend to be higher.

There's a hitch for participating colleges, too: If too many students default, the college could be barred from other federal aid programs. That's a concern at schools such as Bevill State, where more than half the student body qualifies for federal Pell Grants for low-income students.

Though most students have access to federal loans, a study released in April found that about 25% of 1,078 two-year colleges don't participate. Alabama is surpassed only by Georgia in the percentage of community college students who can't access federal loans. In Georgia, 60% are affected; in Alabama, 51%.

A main attraction of the federal loan program is its relatively low interest rate and minimal fees, says Robert Shireman of the non-profit Project on Student Debt, which conducted the study. He says non-participation leaves students with a meager array of options. They can take out private

loans, which are riskier and more expensive. They can work — or work more. They can use credit cards. Or they can quit school.

Now, with some of the biggest lenders, such as Citibank, cutting back on service to community colleges, Shireman says federal loans are even more important.

In response to the loan climate, last month the community college association collaborated with another group to offer a program to help member schools navigate federal loan programs.

"We want to be sure that when a college wants to make loans available to its students, that capital is available," says David Baime, a vice president of the association.

At Bevill State, which ended participation in the federal loan program in 1989, Morrison says he's reconsidering. "It's getting to a point now that every college is going to have to look at some type of loan system."

Some good news: Though default rates were high in the early '90s, the Project on Student Debt found high default rates and sanctions to be relatively rare today.

Still, among schools that offer federal loans, some do so reluctantly. Wallace State Community College, about a two-hour drive from Bevill State's main campus, joined the federal program in 2003 after tuition increased 35% over the previous fall.

Today, the average Wallace State student graduates \$14,000 in debt — a "heart-rending statistic," says president Vicki Hawsey.

Of those students who completed a community college degree in 2003-04, 33% had student loans; the average amount was \$9,061, according to an analysis of federal data by the Project on Student Debt.

At a time when a college degree is increasingly the surest ticket to economic security, some students acknowledge that debt may be inevitable.

"It would be better if we could save up," says Samantha Sherer, 23, of Nauvoo, a waitress who enrolled this summer at Bevill State. She says she and her husband "already have a truck payment and all those other bills, too."

But she has long aspired to teach math and coach volleyball. "Now that I've worked my tail off (in service jobs), I realize the importance of an education."

FINANCIAL AID LIMITS CAN BE ROADBLOCK

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Tuition, though it's rising faster than inflation, isn't the main culprit. At \$2,361, last year's

average community college cost was just 38% of what public four-year universities charged, says the non-profit College Board, which tracks annual tuition increases. Bigger factors:

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A GREATER NEED FOR AID

The percentage of students applying for financial aid is growing faster at community colleges than at four-year schools.

Public two-year

2000-01: 24.8%

2005-06: 34.1%

Public four-year

2000-01: 53.5%

2005-06: 59.2%

Private non-profit four year

2000-01: 61.7%

2005-06: 66.0%

Source: the Institute for Access & Success

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A USA TODAY REPORT

AVAILABLE NOW:

- **A global challenge:** Advocates say community colleges are crucial to ensuring the nation's workforce can compete in a global economy. Are they up to the challenge?
- **Bottom line:** Funding traditionally has favored the best and the brightest, but the status quo is being challenged.
- **How to measure success?** Graduation- rate data paint an unfair and inaccurate picture of community college results, advocates say.
- **Financial challenge:** Community colleges pride themselves on being the best bargains in education, yet affordability remains a barrier for many. Tuition isn't the main culprit.

COMING SOON:

- How state policies influence what happens at community colleges.
- Community colleges, an American invention, are catching on worldwide.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Commentary<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v54/i45/45a06401.htm>

From the issue dated July 18, 2008

POINT OF VIEW

Colleges Need to Offer Clear Paths to Leadership

By ERROLL B. DAVIS JR.

I came to the University System of Georgia after a long career in the private sector, mostly in the utility industry. When I became chancellor of the system in 2006, many people asked me if I truly knew what I was getting into.

The answer, as it turned out, was not entirely.

Having served on a number of higher-education boards, I took the job with a moderate sense of understanding. I did not feel completely unprepared and knew that to be effective I would have to perform as successfully in academe as I had in the private sector.

But, frankly, I lost about a year because I didn't fully appreciate how hard it is in an academic environment to build the leadership capability to get things done. In large part that's because the route to leadership in the private sector differs significantly from the route in higher education.

What I am about to say should not be viewed as a condemnation of the men and women who teach our students or have made our American system of higher education the envy of the world. I understand that, at many colleges, great leaders are cultivated, accountability is central to the culture, and sustained professional development is a reality. I also know that intensive teamwork — on committees, in the classroom, in departments, in labs — is central to many higher-education institutions. But, generally speaking, there are some essential and fundamental differences in the cultures of academe and the business world.

In academe, you spend your early years focusing on your discipline. To earn a terminal degree, you have to have tremendous focus — which is, by necessity, usually quite self-centered. It takes a median of seven years after graduating from college to earn a Ph.D. in the humanities. You end up with a lot of knowledge, but the process is designed to be all about you — your needs, your learning, your dissertation.

Then, around age 29, your next goal — six years out — is earning tenure. It's the same process that you've followed all along, except now you don't even have a thesis adviser with whom to interact. Tenure acquisition requires a focus on research, publishing, and supposedly teaching and service. But again, it's all about you — your research, your publications, your persona, your scholarly stardom.

cc: JPS ✓

You do well, and now, at 35, you finally earn tenure. And what do we have? We have a person with tremendous knowledge, in one area — and not a lot more than that.

In the commercial culture, in contrast, the focus from the start is on working in increasingly diverse teams and learning skills of negotiation and problem-solving. After some time and training, you may get the chance to manage people. But most importantly, your performance is constantly assessed and formally evaluated.

If you can survive all the filters, you are given more responsibility over more people and more resources. At age 35, you are a pretty well-developed product. For example, I was the chief financial officer of a New York Stock Exchange listed company at age 34.

But let's return to our academic counterpart, the now-tenured professor. How does that person move into a leadership position? It's not just that the path is poorly marked — in some cases, it may not even exist. Further, the background and experience of our newly tenured professors suggest that they often aren't interested in management. The thought process is often "I didn't study for 17 years just to be an administrator, a bureaucrat."

In the academic environment, processes are seen as something bureaucracies do *to* you and not *for* you. The culture reinforces a strong sense of self as opposed to the team — a strong sense of individual goals versus a sense of the greater good or common goal. There is simply no structural focus on leadership.

So, what do colleges do? First they seduce someone into becoming a department chair, then a dean, then a provost or a vice president of academic affairs, and eventually a president. Is there any required management or leadership training in the process? Not consistently. Is there any rigorous and continuing assessment of management ability? Not consistently.

Thus people are thrust into leadership positions who are often unable to work in teams, have short tempers, and display rudimentary social skills. In many instances colleges don't have a formal assessment system but rather a weighing system of "good" versus "bad." As a higher-education leader, it may be that if your "goods" far outweigh your "bads," you can get away with a lot of poor behavior.

The private sector is not immune to some of the same shortcomings. We have only to look at Enron or the mortgage industry to see what happens when the culture allows people to get away with bad things. But those are the exceptions that prove the rule. By and large the private sector has done a reasonably good job of setting clear expectations for performance and providing a well-marked path of growth and accountability for its employees.

As James Collins notes in his monograph *Good to Great*, planning, discipline, and execution are not business principles. They are leadership principles. But the primary lesson is this: You cannot expect a culture to adopt a more comprehensive leadership style overnight if it doesn't systemically train leaders or encourage people to aspire to leadership. That is the challenge everywhere, including in higher education: to build leaders in a systematic manner.

Trustees of higher-education institutions should be examining what processes are in place to hire and nurture presidents who understand how to instill leadership throughout the institution, including establishing metrics to hold decision makers at all levels accountable for their actions — or inactions.

Both senior administrators and governing boards should also learn to base decisions on leading indicators, as opposed to lagging indicators. Graduation rates are a lagging indicator. Retention rates are

a leading indicator. Do we really want to wait six years to recognize and then eloquently explain low graduation rates, or do we want to focus on annual retention and nip problems in the bud? In short, college administrators must be taught to use leading indicators to alter future conditions. That is the essence of what leaders do — manage risks and alter futures.

Our hardest challenge in academe will be to create a system that actively develops leadership skills much earlier in people's careers than we do today. At the University System of Georgia, we are working to develop and reinforce such processes. For example, today we have no systemwide human-resources function. We are changing that and putting in place a human-resources organization that will establish clear paths to leadership. Our new head of human resources is identifying and creating the needed infrastructure, and our next big step will be to develop content. While it is too early to say precisely what form content will take, it will be tailored to our needs. As a result, we will begin to identify talent and make sure those people get their leadership tickets punched early in the game. Without such a system, we cannot expect the 45-year-old manager in academe to have the same depth of leadership skills or managerial maturity as the 45-year-old corporate manager.

We have a tremendous pool of bright, extremely talented people in our colleges. However, we won't be adequately effective, efficient, or accountable if we don't develop our people. In fact, the lack of a deep leadership culture has consequences that we, and unfortunately our publics, see all the time in the form of poor risk management.

Simply put, too many things go wrong, too often. For example, a lack of appreciation for the need for a culture of risk management, coupled with inadequate in-depth training for risk management, led to some serious abuses of a state purchasing-card program by a few employees within our system. The program is intended to reduce the time and costs associated with the purchase of supplies, but with not enough training in the oversight of the program and a lack of appreciation for our exposure to risk, those abuses created significant credibility issues.

At some point, the public simply will not continue to support the truly good and great things we do in higher education if we keep demonstrating that we can't effectively manage the mundane. And until we create a culture of accountability, until it becomes part of our DNA, we are going to remain susceptible to both operational and strategic problems.

As history suggests, it is no accident that America has created a higher-education system that is the gold standard worldwide. But other countries are catching on — and catching up. We have an obligation to sustain and build upon our great historical legacy. There is no question that the private sector can offer tremendous resources to help advance higher-education goals. The challenge is to figure out how to blend the two very different worlds in ways that truly benefit our colleges — and one way to do that is to borrow from the corporate world some of the ways that they have trained their leaders in the art of leading.

Erroll B. Davis Jr. is chancellor of the University System of Georgia. This essay was adapted from a speech at the annual meeting of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

<http://chronicle.com>

Section: Commentary

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The Chronicle of Higher Education

July 18, 2008

Three Years Into Fight for Accountability, Spellings Again Seeking Traction

By Paul Basken

For three years, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has been calling on American colleges to do a better job of meeting critical national needs. Now she has only six months left in office, and her allies are deeply disappointed by the rate of improvement.

The secretary created her Commission on the Future of Higher Education in September 2005, wanting to make colleges more affordable and accessible for students, and more accountable for their performance.

The nation has seen some change in that direction. Congress raised the maximum value of the Pell Grant, the main federal grant for low-income students, by 6 percent to \$4,310 in the last academic year, the first increase in four years. Some colleges and groups of colleges have begun adopting standardized testing measures and publicizing the results. The Education Department has improved its Web-based tools for comparing institutions.

But advocates for the depth of change suggested by the secretary and her commission remain dissatisfied. The Education Department, which gathered former commissioners and other education and business leaders here this week for its second annual conference on carrying out the commission's ideas, found a world in which prospective students are still unclear about which institutions can best serve them, and employers are still unhappy with the quality and quantity of the college graduates they have available to hire.

"There's still a lot that needs to be done," Vickie L. Schray, a senior Education Department adviser, said in summarizing one set of strategy sessions to review the accountability work done by colleges. Groups evaluating the work on access and affordability also reported significant shortfalls.

Colleges, as a group, had limited enthusiasm for the secretary's efforts. The only commission member who refused to endorse the final report was David Ward, then president of the American Council on Education. After spending a year listening to his fellow commissioners deride the work of his association's members, Mr. Ward said he was wary of endorsing an outline that Congress might use in unpredictable ways.

Fear of Losing Special Identity

A leading concern among colleges involved commission proposals for the greater use of standardized tests. Such tests, perhaps imposed by the threatened loss of federal funds, could imperil the individuality that gives the United States the world's most respected higher education, college leaders have argued. Mr. Ward welcomed other commission ideas, such as greater federal support for low-income students, though he acknowledged his members preferred that such money be channeled through the institutions rather than through the students.

Although the commission put colleges on the defensive, the annual follow-up sessions have evolved into gentler experiences. Representatives of colleges were given the stage here to explain efforts, some of which started before the Spellings commission began meeting, to improve their operations.

William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland, described a partnership with state leaders in which the university makes a determined effort to match priorities with those leaders. As examples, Mr. Kirwan cited efforts to coordinate curricula with community colleges, reducing costs for both students and taxpayers who finance the institutions, and efforts to train more mathematics and science teachers for Maryland's elementary and secondary schools.

"There is a hunger out there for higher education to show some responsibility for cost containment," he said. "This effort has given us great credibility in our interactions with state leaders."

Business Leaders Want More

A group of corporate leaders, also invited by the Education Department to share the spotlight, were less impressed. Colleges are still not paying enough attention to meeting the nation's economic needs, said Richard Holland, a retired advertising executive who now serves as chairman of Building Bright Futures, an educational-advocacy group in Nebraska.

"We just talk about this all the time, and we don't do anything about it," Mr. Holland said. "What we're doing in this country is nonsense."

Richard Stephens, senior vice president for human resources and administration at Boeing, said his industry is trying to compile its own data on which colleges produce the best graduates. The same type of data should be collected nationwide, Mr. Stephens said. "To me," he said, "that's the value that the public's looking for."

Still Seeking Measures of Student Success

The Bush administration has tried to answer such pleas by suggesting the creation of a national database of college students to track their progress after graduation in order to reveal which colleges are producing successful graduates. Colleges have successfully fought the idea in Congress, calling it an excessive intrusion into student privacy.

In the absence of such data, many students evaluate colleges with the help of less-direct measures, most notably the annual rankings of colleges assembled by *U.S. News & World Report*. Colleges and other experts, however, increasingly deride the magazine's rankings as largely a measure of status and wealth, considering such factors as alumni donations rather than more direct data on student achievement.

Ben Wildavsky, a former editor at the magazine who now serves as a senior fellow at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, said the *U.S. News* rankings are only as strong as the colleges allow them to be, given the limited types of data they provide.

"When the data is available, believe me, *U.S. News* is ready to make improvements on what it has," Mr. Wildavsky said.

He was promptly challenged by a member of the Spellings commission, Charlene R. Nunley, a former chief executive of Montgomery College, in Maryland. She faulted the magazine's ratings, which focus on four-year institutions, for omitting more than half the nation's colleges.

The conference was led by Sara Martinez Tucker, a former AT&T executive who now serves as under secretary in charge of higher education. It came just two months after the resignation of Diane Auer Jones, who had been assistant secretary for postsecondary education. Ms. Jones complained that Ms. Tucker has been overly concerned with shaping American higher education to meet the needs of corporations, to the detriment of the liberal arts (*The Chronicle*, June 27).

At least one voice emerged at the conference to briefly raise that point. Dale S. Kuehne, an associate professor of politics at Saint Anselm College, said the conference seemed to be placing too much attention on measuring students on the basis of their future economic worth.

Any holistic measure of the value of education should consider students who graduate and devote their energies toward volunteer work or other socially beneficial pursuits, Mr. Kuehne said. "I wish for my students to be good citizens," he said.

The conference was due to conclude today with an address from Ms. Spellings.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

July 21, 2008

Spellings Campaign Runs Low on Time and Power to Persuade

By PAUL BASKEN

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has made another high-profile attempt to convince colleges that they risk painful government interventions if they don't improve the quality of their programs and help more students identify and afford them.

With just six months until Ms. Spellings leaves office, colleges seem increasingly willing to keep taking that risk.

The secretary delivered her latest public warning on the subject at a conference on Friday to mark the second anniversary of a report by her Commission on the Future of Higher Education.

The secretary's commission, resented by colleges as much for its style as its substance, recommended in September 2006 that institutions consider standardized tests and other methods for improving their educational quality and the confidence the public places in them.

Many colleges have in fact improved their self-assessment methods over the past two years. A few have even adopted standardized exams and publicized the results, and more are doing so.

But many of those were moving in that direction before the Spellings Commission began urging them to do so. And many others remain resistant, believing that federal demands for accountability threaten the individualism and innovation that has kept higher education among the shrinking number of endeavors in which America remains an admired global leader.

Standardization vs. Individualism

Even when working with a few dozen college leaders who chose to attend its conference, held in Chicago, the Education Department struggled to meet its goal of finding consensus on concrete additional steps that the colleges could take in the next 18 months.

The resulting to-do list, crafted during seven hours of department-led talks over two days, included directing more financial aid to low-income students and aligning curriculum from kindergarten through graduate school. Separate groups of conference participants, representing corporate and governmental leaders, backed similar goals. And like-minded groups of stakeholders produced similar recommendations a year ago on the commission report's first anniversary.

Yet many colleges still resist standardized tests out of a concern that their missions are too individualized to allow for meaningful national comparisons. Many continue to direct financial

aid toward high-performing applicants rather than low-income candidates out of a desire to improve their image and ranking. And many are refusing to make a fuller public disclosure of their performance data, asserting privacy rights for both students and the institution.

The exercises in Chicago appeared to do little to respond to those colleges' concerns. "Transparency is vastly overrated as a solution," Daniel F. Chambliss, a sociology professor at Hamilton College, in New York, told a conference panel in one of the more candid admissions of the attitudes among his colleagues.

"What the public wants is to get a good education at a reasonable cost," said Mr. Chambliss, a member of the executive committee of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, one of the six regional accrediting agencies. "Rather than focusing our efforts on trying to somehow convince the public through various data strategies," he said, colleges should "just do a good job and let them figure it out."

That's not the data-driven approach favored by Ms. Spellings. Her under secretary in charge of higher education, Sara Martinez Tucker, nevertheless claimed progress.

Getting the Data Right

Education Department officials were trying in Chicago to get the educational, political, and business leaders in attendance to take more direct responsibility for meeting the commission's goals, Ms. Tucker, host of the conference, said in an interview. Even if some colleges remain resistant, the department wants to "shine the spotlight on those people who are doing it right," she said.

That definition of "right" remains under dispute. At the same time Ms. Tucker was leading the meeting in Chicago, a former colleague was back in Washington accusing the Spellings commission of relying on "misleading" statistics and outdated data to draw mistaken conclusions about the changes needed in higher education.

"There's a real disconnect between the data they're looking at and the conclusions they draw" about the quality of higher education, said Diane Auer Jones, who resigned in May as assistant secretary for postsecondary education. She made her remarks at a briefing on Friday for Congressional aides.

As an example, Ms. Jones cited the statistic—included in the commission's 2006 report—that only 60 percent of students who enter college graduate. While that could mean that colleges are failing to graduate enough students, it could also point to problems with the department's data-collection system, which counts only "first time, full-time" students, said Ms. Jones, now president of the Washington Campus, a consortium of university business schools.

The commission overstepped its authority by wading into a discussion of academic quality, Ms. Jones said. The Education Department's role, she argued, is to ensure that taxpayer funds, such as Pell Grants, are being spent wisely. It should not be trying to hold an institution to its own standards of achievement, she said.

The commission's recommendations suffer from "a naive view that if we could just publish test scores, parents could pick the cheapest school with the best test scores," Ms. Jones said. That view overlooks the fact that families weigh many factors when choosing a college, she said, and fails to address the root causes of rising costs—among them, excessive federal regulation and students' demands for amenities.

The Education Department itself could do more to help low-income students afford college by publicizing cases in which colleges reduce their own aid when students receive Pell Grants, freeing up money to subsidize wealthier applicants, Jon H. Oberg, a former department researcher, said in an interview.

Such diversions of Pell Grants, the main federal subsidy for low-income students, can be fought with data showing which colleges practice them, as they cannot "stand the light of day," Mr. Oberg said.

Simplifying Financial Aid

Ms. Tucker instead highlighted for the conference the ways in which the department could help students of all income categories gain access to federal student aid, proposing to shorten the government's standard aid-application form to nine questions from more than 100.

The commission had called for a shorter aid-application process, a goal that has long been hindered by data demands from individual states. Ms. Tucker's proposal seeks to overcome that by separating the application into two parts, allowing the department to give students and colleges their aid-eligibility figures earlier in the annual process.

Complicated governmental procedures also may be handicapping the Academic Competitiveness and National Smart Grant programs, two new federal initiatives intended to supplement Pell Grants for low-income students who take challenging coursework.

The department awarded roughly \$430-million through the two grant programs in the 2006-7 year, well below the \$790-million appropriated by Congress. Many institutions are "struggling with the process," especially when assisting first-generation college students, Stephen R. Sharkey, a professor of social science at Alverno College, told Ms. Spellings.

The secretary faulted high schools for not doing enough to prepare such students. "There is a rationing of rigor, of course work, that is embarrassing," she said.

Still Lagging in Science

The United States, meanwhile, is well behind schedule for a government-endorsed goal of doubling within 10 years the number of college graduates with science and engineering degrees, a business coalition reported last Tuesday.

It's not just the Education Department that is warning colleges they need to do more. Allies such as Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Republican of Tennessee who persuaded Ms. Spellings last year to

back off her pursuit of standardized testing, have made clear in recent weeks that they also believe the public wants to see better results as the nation's economic health appears increasingly tied to its educational strength.

"I feel honor bound to remind you," the secretary told the conference on Friday, "that in the absence of continued leadership in education, others will step in. When public demand reaches critical mass, policy makers are compelled to act whether they're in the Congress or on state boards or in state legislatures."

Many in Congress backed Senator Alexander last year as he tried to limit federal oversight of higher education. This year, as lawmakers work to complete comprehensive legislation governing higher education, they are including dozens of new reporting requirements in such areas as tuition increases, transfer-of-credit policies, computer file sharing, meningitis outbreaks, fire safety, voter registration, and technology disposal.

Colleges, by their inaction, are forcing that type of heavy-handed response from Congress, Ms. Spellings told the conference. "I suspect their solutions," she said, "will likely not be as informed or sophisticated as what you would propose."

USA Today

July 23, 2008

'Turning point' arrives as U.S. community colleges' purview grows

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY

By Betty Young's count, it's been nearly three years since Jay Leno has made any cracks at the expense of community colleges. She should know: In the fall of 2005, after he had taken what she thought was a string of cheap shots, Young rode her Harley-Davidson more than halfway across the country to his *Tonight Show* studios and asked him to lay off.

He made no promises, but Young, a graduate and longtime president of community colleges, considers Leno's silence on the subject these days a victory. Perhaps more important, her public relations trek served as a sort of rallying cry for community college leaders nationwide. Tired of their image as the Rodney Dangerfields of higher education, they have become increasingly vocal in their demand for respect. Nothing less than the nation's economic future is at stake, they argue.

They might be right. Community colleges train 80% of the country's police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians and more than half of its new nurses and health care workers. They are the go-to destinations for displaced workers and immigrants seeking language and cultural skills. Community colleges are where people most often go when they need to brush up on math or English before pursuing a college degree. And they have become increasingly attractive to families who can't afford to send their kids to a four-year school.

BLOG: A question and answer about community colleges

PEOPLE: Faces of community college

Now, community college leaders insist that their institutions, created to serve their local communities, have grown even more important on a larger stage. If the USA wants to keep pace with other industrialized nations, studies show, more of its workforce will need to be educated, including those who have traditionally been left behind by higher education: low-income students, working adults, underserved minorities and those who need remedial help before college. Community colleges, which were founded on the very notion that anybody who wants an education ought to be able to get one, are positioned to serve those populations, advocates say.

"This is really a turning point," says Travis Reindl of Jobs for the Future, a Boston non-profit focused on education and the workforce. "Some kind of education beyond high school is becoming a universal expectation."

Even so, as a policy concern, community colleges "are often invisible," says a report released in February by a national commission of community college leaders. Collectively, they survive on budgets that average about one-fifth of those of their four-year public counterparts.

In 2000-2001, the latest year for which Education Department data are available, the nation spent \$140 billion on four-year public universities and just under \$30 billion for public two-year colleges. That ratio has remained relatively stable over the years.

Yet for the last decade, enrollments have been increasing faster at two-year schools than four-year schools. Today, community colleges enroll 6.5 million degree-seeking students, or nearly half (47%) of all college undergraduates. And no one documents the expanding demand nationwide for non-credit courses such as English as a Second Language and workforce training. An estimated 5 million students are enrolled in those kinds of programs, says the American Association of Community Colleges, a Washington non-profit that gets data from its 1,200 member schools.

A wider audience appears to be acknowledging the role two-year colleges play in today's economy. The association has lobbied members of Congress — 205 in the House and 31 in the Senate — who are crafting legislation to help two-year colleges compete for more federal funds.

The Bush administration was the first to have a deputy assistant Education secretary for community colleges. And presidential hopefuls Barack Obama and John McCain have discussed plans to help community colleges.

Businesses also are examining ways to better tap into community colleges. "The skills and capabilities we need in our workforce have changed dramatically," says William Green, CEO of Accenture, a consulting firm. A community college graduate himself, Green says they are "overlooked and underappreciated."

Some needs unmet

Heartwarming stories abound of how community colleges can transform lives.

In 2001, Bruce Haupt was a high school dropout making \$13 an hour. Today, at 26, he is enrolled at the Harvard Kennedy School and plans a career in community college administration. Without the support of "a couple of very key professors" and others while a student at Brevard Community College in Florida, he says, "I certainly would not be where I am today."

And yet, many of those who attend community college are far less successful. In the first six years after enrolling in a community college, only 36% of students earn a certificate or an associate's or bachelor's degree, according to an analysis of federal data by the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York. And just 51% of freshmen attending two-year institutions return for sophomore year, compared with a 69% national average for all public and private higher education institutions, says 2007 data from non-profit ACT Inc.

There are countless stories behind those figures. Courtney Bailey, 19, who pursued a criminal justice degree last year at a community college in El Cajon, Calif., quit because "a lot of it just seemed like a waste of my time." Plus, her history teacher "hated me. ... He told me I didn't appreciate history enough so he wasn't going to pass me." She hopes to join a police academy when she turns 21.

Phil Bertoni, who teaches math part time at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Ill., says students in developmental (sometimes called remedial) classes, particularly older students who work and support families, sometimes are surprised by the workload. "I would say, 'Look, I'm here to help. ... I want you to get through this with at least a C. But you have to do your part by attending class, doing assignments, being prepared, performing on quizzes and tests, asking questions. ... Gradually, then, the drops would come, and finally I would end up with about half of what I started out with.'"

The challenge ahead

Some community college presidents and educators say it's unfair to expect higher success rates, considering their shoestring budgets and their multiple goals. Like their four-year counterparts, though, they are under growing pressure to ensure that more students succeed.

A report released in June by California's Legislative Analyst's Office, for example, concluded the state's 109 community colleges "fail to provide a substantial number of new students with required orientation and counseling services," and teaching approaches "are often not aligned with students' learning styles."

Surveys conducted at hundreds of community colleges suggest California's schools are not unusual. Last year, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, an initiative that helps schools assess whether students are engaged in practices that lead to learning, found that more than half of 310,000 students on more than 500 campuses reported they got little to no attention from advisers in their first four weeks. Nearly half (47%) said they had never talked with instructors outside of class about class, grades or assignments.

Such findings worry community college advocates. "If we're going to stake the future of our communities and our country on the ability of community colleges to educate more people, they are going to have to show us they're able to do it," says Kay McClenney, director of the survey at the University of Texas-Austin.

But the news is not all bad. In the last few years, a number of initiatives have been developed to help community colleges better track and understand student behavior. And a recent analysis found students at some community colleges reported notably higher levels of classroom participation in several categories than did freshmen at four-year research institutions.

While it's difficult to draw sweeping conclusions, "clearly some community colleges are providing a superior-quality undergrad education than a four-year" school, says researcher Kevin Carey, a policy analyst with Education Sector, a Washington think tank. He urges community

college leaders to build on such data to ensure all students have a positive experience. If they did, he is willing to bet, community colleges could shed their junior status once and for all.

When it comes to educating undergraduates, four-year colleges are "afraid of being compared to you," he told community college leaders at a recent conference. The reason is simple, he says: "They have no way to go but down."

The Chronicle of Higher Education

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POINT OF VIEW

Colleges Need to Offer Clear Paths to Leadership

By ERROLL B. DAVIS JR.

I came to the University System of Georgia after a long career in the private sector, mostly in the utility industry. When I became chancellor of the system in 2006, many people asked me if I truly knew what I was getting into.

The answer, as it turned out, was not entirely.

Having served on a number of higher-education boards, I took the job with a moderate sense of understanding. I did not feel completely unprepared and knew that to be effective I would have to perform as successfully in academe as I had in the private sector.

But, frankly, I lost about a year because I didn't fully appreciate how hard it is in an academic environment to build the leadership capability to get things done. In large part that's because the route to leadership in the private sector differs significantly from the route in higher education.

What I am about to say should not be viewed as a condemnation of the men and women who teach our students or have made our American system of higher education the envy of the world. I understand that, at many colleges, great leaders are cultivated, accountability is central to the culture, and sustained professional development is a reality. I also know that intensive teamwork — on committees, in the classroom, in departments, in labs — is central to many higher-education institutions. But, generally speaking, there are some essential and fundamental differences in the cultures of academe and the business world.

In academe, you spend your early years focusing on your discipline. To earn a terminal degree, you have to have tremendous focus — which is, by necessity, usually quite self-centered. It takes a median of seven years after graduating from college to earn a Ph.D. in the humanities. You end up with a lot of knowledge, but the process is designed to be all about you — your needs, your learning, your dissertation.

Then, around age 29, your next goal — six years out — is earning tenure. It's the same process that you've followed all along, except now you don't even have a thesis adviser with whom to interact. Tenure acquisition requires a focus on research, publishing, and supposedly teaching and service. But again, it's all about you — your research, your publications, your persona, your scholarly stardom.

You do well, and now, at 35, you finally earn tenure. And what do we have? We have a person with tremendous knowledge, in one area — and not a lot more than that.

In the commercial culture, in contrast, the focus from the start is on working in increasingly diverse teams and learning skills of negotiation and problem-solving. After some time and training, you may get the chance to manage people. But most importantly, your performance is constantly assessed and formally evaluated.

If you can survive all the filters, you are given more responsibility over more people and more resources. At age 35, you are a pretty well-developed product. For example, I was the chief financial officer of a New York Stock Exchange listed company at age 34.

But let's return to our academic counterpart, the now-tenured professor. How does that person move into a leadership position? It's not just that the path is poorly marked — in some cases, it may not even exist. Further, the background and experience of our newly tenured professors suggest that they often aren't interested in management. The thought process is often "I didn't study for 17 years just to be an administrator, a bureaucrat."

In the academic environment, processes are seen as something bureaucracies do *to* you and not *for* you. The culture reinforces a strong sense of self as opposed to the team — a strong sense of individual goals versus a sense of the greater good or common goal. There is simply no structural focus on leadership.

So, what do colleges do? First they seduce someone into becoming a department chair, then a dean, then a provost or a vice president of academic affairs, and eventually a president. Is there any required management or leadership training in the process? Not consistently. Is there any rigorous and continuing assessment of management ability? Not consistently.

Thus people are thrust into leadership positions who are often unable to work in teams, have short tempers, and display rudimentary social skills. In many instances colleges don't have a formal assessment system but rather a weighing system of "good" versus "bad." As a higher-education leader, it may be that if your "goods" far outweigh your "bads," you can get away with a lot of poor behavior.

The private sector is not immune to some of the same shortcomings. We have only to look at Enron or the mortgage industry to see what happens when the culture allows people to get away with bad things. But those are the exceptions that prove the rule. By and large the private sector has done a reasonably good job of setting clear expectations for performance and providing a well-marked path of growth and accountability for its employees.

As James Collins notes in his monograph *Good to Great*, planning, discipline, and execution are not business principles. They are leadership principles. But the primary lesson is this: You cannot expect a culture to adopt a more comprehensive leadership style overnight if it doesn't systemically train leaders or encourage people to aspire to leadership. That is the challenge everywhere, including in higher education: to build leaders in a systematic manner.

Trustees of higher-education institutions should be examining what processes are in place to hire and nurture presidents who understand how to instill leadership throughout the institution, including establishing metrics to hold decision makers at all levels accountable for their actions — or inactions.

Both senior administrators and governing boards should also learn to base decisions on leading indicators, as opposed to lagging indicators. Graduation rates are a lagging indicator. Retention rates are a leading indicator. Do we really want to wait six years to recognize and then eloquently explain low graduation rates, or do we want to focus on annual retention and nip problems in the bud? In short, college administrators must be taught to use leading indicators to alter future conditions. That is the essence of what leaders do — manage risks and alter futures.

Our hardest challenge in academe will be to create a system that actively develops leadership skills much earlier in people's careers than we do today. At the University System of Georgia, we are working to develop and reinforce such processes. For example, today we have no systemwide human-resources function. We are changing that and putting in place a human-resources organization that will establish clear paths to leadership. Our new head of human resources is identifying and creating the needed infrastructure, and our next big step will be to develop content. While it is too early to say precisely what form content will take, it will be tailored to our needs. As a result, we will begin to identify talent and make sure those people get their leadership tickets punched early in the game. Without such a system, we cannot expect the 45-year-old manager in academe to have the same depth of leadership skills or managerial maturity as the 45-year-old corporate manager.

We have a tremendous pool of bright, extremely talented people in our colleges. However, we won't be adequately effective, efficient, or accountable if we don't develop our people. In fact, the lack of a deep leadership culture has consequences that we, and unfortunately our publics, see all the time in the form of poor risk management.

Simply put, too many things go wrong, too often. For example, a lack of appreciation for the need for a culture of risk management, coupled with inadequate in-depth training for risk management, led to some serious abuses of a state purchasing-card program by a few employees within our system. The program is intended to reduce the time and costs associated with the purchase of supplies, but with not enough training in the oversight of the program and a lack of appreciation for our exposure to risk, those abuses created significant credibility issues.

At some point, the public simply will not continue to support the truly good and great things we do in higher education if we keep demonstrating that we can't effectively manage the mundane. And until we create a culture of accountability, until it becomes part of our DNA, we are going to remain susceptible to both operational and strategic problems.

As history suggests, it is no accident that America has created a higher-education system that is the gold standard worldwide. But other countries are catching on — and catching up. We have an obligation to sustain and build upon our great historical legacy. There is no question that the private sector can offer tremendous resources to help advance higher-education goals. The challenge is to figure out how to blend the two very different worlds in ways that truly benefit our colleges — and one way to do that is to borrow from the corporate world some of the ways that they have trained their leaders in the art of leading.

July 18, 2008

Keeping Clickers in the Classroom

Any gathering of technology specialists who work in education — or educators who specialize in technology, as it were — is bound to attract its share of gimmicks, gadgets and digital fads that won't be seen at the next meeting or will, by that time, have been consigned to perpetual semi-obscure deep in some forgotten corner of blogland.

At this year's BbWorld '08 conference, held among the neon lights and unavoidable distractions of Las Vegas, perhaps it was inevitable that a few such bells and whistles would find their way into the program. At an annual affair whose focus is how best to marshal the latest information technology (namely, course management software sold by the conference's organizer, Blackboard) for educational ends, that meant a bevy of sessions devoted to Web 2.0 buzzwords and various plug-ins and modules intended to enhance the learning experience for that ever-elusive but somehow increasingly important demographic grouping: the so-called millennials.

So there were speakers on hand to talk about the benefits of blogs and wikis, podcasts and vodcasts, social networking and text messages, all to penetrate the mysterious minds of pampered college students who otherwise, it would seem, would rather pass their time listening blissfully to their illegally downloaded music while blowing off classes and obsessively checking their friends' Facebook status updates.

In some cases — like blog, wiki and iTunes U functionality — the Blackboard suite was the preferred vehicle to show how colleges can integrate that grab bag of Web technologies into their course materials. In others — like 3-D modeling, Flash animations, embedded video and even “holographic professors” — presenters demonstrated how other tools can be used to jazz up a mere 2-D, Boomer-oriented lecture.

Yet at a session on Thursday discussing social learning techniques, at least a couple of audience members registered a rare instance of discontent with the status quo while a presenter spoke about Blackboard's new built-in blogging capabilities. “I'm tired of tying everything back to Blackboard!” one audience member blurted out, causing some murmurs in the packed room and also encouraging a few others to chime in.

The presenter, Darla Ausel of Clarion University's Learning Technology Center, quickly changed the subject, but not before several protests were lodged about relying on the platform for blogging purposes: For example, will such content be readily available on the Internet, say, 30 years from now? Don't we expect permanence on the Web?

Ausel responded that in many cases, course-related blogging might make more sense behind a password-protected wall, and that in any event such content can be exported for other uses.

One Simple Little Device

Whatever educators collectively decide about the utility of Web 2.0 tools in the classroom, one simple little device that received some notice during the conference's last day may be on its way to delivering on its hype: the humble clicker. The small, handheld wireless input tools that resemble a miniature remote control have gradually found their way into high-tech classrooms over the past several years — especially in business-oriented fields — with some instructors swearing by them and others dismissing them as yet another needless gizmo.

But what if they're not? Recent studies at Ohio State University, for example, found that students in physics classes making regular use of clickers — in quizzes, for example — earned final exam scores that were about 10 percentage points higher than those without. The gains also seemed to minimize differences between the sexes.

At the session, 34 percent of the audience said (through their clickers, of course) that they had used the devices either as students or as instructors. Another 24 percent had used them only as instructors, while an additional 24 percent had never used clickers at all. (The rest had never seen or heard of them before.) And, in a quick clicker survey, the audience was mainly (62 percent) from four-year colleges.

Kathy Keairns, a senior instructional design coordinator at the University of Denver, talked about her institution's experience with clickers and how they've improved the quality of instruction and learning there. In one chemistry class, for example, the professor assigned 10 percent of the course grade to "clicker questions" asked in class — three points per session, one for attendance and the other two for correct answers.

The results, she said, were increased attendance, more active participation in class and more cooperative learning, since students discussed the questions before they answered them with their clickers. Ninety percent of the students in the general chemistry course rated the devices as "useful" or "very useful."

A political science professor who used clickers to demonstrate public opinion polling concepts in class also found that the quality of discussions improved, Keairns said. Other benefits, she added, were an emphasis on "time on task" and the availability of prompt feedback.

So do clickers enhance student learning? As with many classroom technologies, the answer, she said, is: "It depends." Clickers have to be used properly and in combination with well-designed and well-thought-out questions that are delivered with enough discussion and context. Given those constraints, it seems, clickers could make it out of Vegas intact.

— Andy Guess

July 31

Going To the 'Xtreme'

NEW YORK — The Nokia store on 5th Avenue looks like something Timothy Leary might have dreamed up on an acid trip.

As a gaggle of college bookstore owners enter through Nokia's glass doorway, the neon blue walls behave in chameleon fashion, melting slowly into green. The latest Nokia cell phone models adorn the walls, and — in a pretty nifty trick — product descriptions of each phone flash on flat screens anytime the phones are touched.

"That's probably the most stellar retail concept I've seen in the last decade," proclaims Mikhail Dzuba, manager of the campus bookstore at Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver.

The high tech Nokia store, which is obviously high cost as well, is something most college bookstores would be hard-pressed to mimic. Yet the hope of the National Association of College Stores is that even managers operating on shoestring budgets will be inspired by cutting edge retail concepts. To that end, the association brought about 50 college store managers and directors to Manhattan for a three-day seminar this week, showing the group some of the splashiest retail displays in the world.

While the client base for college stores is typically 18- to 22-year-olds, the average college store director is a woman in her late 40s or early 50s, according to the association. As such, there's often a gap between the director's idea of a perfect shopping experience and the expectations of their college-aged consumers.

"I don't know anymore that I've got the pulse [of this generation]," confessed Carol Miller, director of North Dakota State University's stores.

And there's the rub. How do college stores keep up with the times? Their customers have been wooed by the glitzy marketing of companies like Abercrombie & Fitch, which has transformed its stores into something akin to a rave scene — complete with pulsating music and scantily clad models. In a world where shopping has become a hyper-immersive and interactive experience — today's students expect to be able to customize their own Nike sneakers — where does the college store fit?

During a lunch break at the Food Emporium Monday, one college bookstore manager offered this blunt assessment: Many store buyers are stuck in their ways, and they don't do the research to find out what college students really want.

"The biggest problem with college bookstores is the age of the buyers," said the manager, who asked not to be identified speaking ill of some of her colleagues.

The manager says she “cleaned house” several years ago, weeding out people who seemed entrenched in traditional modes, and unwilling to “walk the floor” to interact with students.

At the University of Hawaii, a relatively young employee says she’s struggled to get the more seasoned higher ups to adapt to changing times. Misha Tajima, development coordinator at Hawaii, says she has pressed her buyer unsuccessfully to add pink apparel that would appeal to young women.

“He refuses to have anything that’s not gray, green or white,” says Tajima, who is in her 30s.

Big Ideas, Small Budgets

Now in its fourth year, the National Association of College Stores’ conference, “Exploring the Xtremes of Collegiate Retailing,” relies heavily on the independent observations of participants. Store managers and directors are let loose in Soho, for instance, taking pictures of unique fixtures and displays in stores like Urban Outfitters and Prada. When they return, participants report on concepts they might be able to borrow for their own stores.

After touring Urban Outfitters, several participants were excited to see the store using old desks and file cabinets to display clothing. Even college stores with low budgets can find outdated furnishings to spruce up a display — a technique known as “re-purposing” in retail parlance.

While some quick fixes are obvious, slim budgets often make big changes difficult at smaller colleges. Lana Harris, manager of the north campus store for Broward College, a two-year institution in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., was full of ideas when she left the association’s seminar last year. She managed to persuade the college to let her paint the store in varied colors — fuchsia and blue among them — but not without some prodding.

“We get to go on these trips, but when it comes to implementing it, it’s always a fight,” Harris says. “It’s frustrating.”

Signs of Change

While some college store managers lament that they’re behind the times, the conference left little doubt that the industry is changing. Once primarily known for textbooks and T-shirts, college stores are now just as likely to sell iPods, Nintendo Wii’s and computer software.

Indeed, textbooks are often the last thing college bookstores want customers to see when they enter. At New York University’s bookstore, which was part of the association’s tour of stores, students are greeted by displays of magazines and bestsellers like Jon Stewart’s *America, the Book*. The textbooks are in the basement.

Cathy Midzain, director of Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, Canada, notes that her store is following the lead of Amazon.com. With a growing emphasis on online sales, Midzain says, “My plan since I got there six years ago was to get rid of all the textbooks entirely.”

Probe: Fed employees may have bought fake degrees

By Eileen Sullivan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

8:29 p.m. July 29, 2008

WASHINGTON – Immigration officials are looking through a list of more than 9,000 names to see how many federal employees may have bought a phony high school or college degree from a Spokane, Wash.-based diploma mill.

The Spokesman-Review newspaper obtained the list and published the names on its Web site Monday. The Justice Department has refused to release the list, which grew out of a lengthy investigation by the U.S. attorney for the Eastern district of Washington.

The list included some people who apparently work for government, educational institutions and the military, according to their e-mail addresses that ended in .gov, .edu or .mil., according to the newspaper report.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, one of the federal agencies that investigates document fraud, is going through the list of 9,612 names and searching for federal employees, agency spokesman Brandon Alvarez-Montgomery said.

It is not known how many Homeland Security Department employees are on this list, he said. But the department's inspector general is investigating what ICE finds. ICE is part of the 208,000-strong department.

Authorities contended the bogus degrees could be used to circumvent U.S. immigration laws and to help the degree holders win promotions and pay raises in government jobs. A task force of state and federal agents served search warrants in August 2005 after investigators found many of the phony degrees were sold in Saudi Arabia, raising national security concerns.

As ICE officials go through the list and identify the federal employees, their names will be sent to their respective agencies for inspector general review, Alvarez-Montgomery said. If a federal employee used a fake degree for personal gain or to get a job with the government, it would be up to the individual agency to take action.

There is no Justice Department investigation into people on the list, Alvarez-Montgomery said.

The newspaper reported that at least nine people with .gov domains worked for federal agencies, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Health and Human Services Department, the National Security Agency and the CIA.

Indictments in the case were returned in 2005, contending that operators of the diploma mill sold fake high school or college degrees to more than 9,000 people in 131 countries, generating more than \$1 million in sales.

The conspirators also made and sold counterfeit copies of degrees and transcripts from legitimate universities, court documents claimed.

The phony diplomas used names such as St. Regis University, James Monroe University and Robertstown University, lawyers said. Counterfeit degrees also were sold in the names of the University of Maryland, the University of Tennessee, Texas A&M and George Washington University.

Investigators also said more than \$43,000 in bribes were paid to three Liberian diplomats, including one payment that was videotaped by Secret Service agents at a hotel in Washington, D.C. Government lawyers have said diplomatic immunity precludes charges against the diplomats.

The Liberian "Board of Education" offered accreditation for the diploma mills in exchange for the bribes, according to court filings.

The leader of a diploma mill, Dixie Ellen Randock, 58, earlier this month was sentenced to three years in prison for conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. Randock's daughter, Heidi Kae Lorhan, was sentenced to a year in prison.

Dixie's husband, Steven K. Randock Sr., 68, who is recovering from open-heart surgery, will be sentenced Aug. 5.

The Randocks and Lorhan were indicted in October 2005 and pleaded guilty March 26, the eve of their trial, to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. In the plea agreement, the U.S. attorney's office dropped charges of money laundering, which carried longer sentences.

The Randocks also agreed to forfeit \$535,000 in cash and their late-model Jaguar.

Defendants Blake Alan Carlson, Richard John Novak, Kenneth Wade Pearson and Amy Leann Hensley await sentencing after pleading guilty and agreeing to cooperate with authorities in exchange for lighter sentences.



EL CAMINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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

July 24, 2008

The Honorable Karen Bass
Speaker of the Assembly
California State Senate
PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax: (916) 319-2147

Dear Assemblymember Bass:

The Conference Committee on the State Budget has adopted a budget for California's community colleges that protects student access and success, which is critically needed during this difficult economic time for California.

As members of both parties stated recently, now is the time to invest in our community colleges, which are uniquely able to provide immediate training for California's citizens and the businesses that will help turn the economy around.

Specifically, the Conference Committee's budget:

- provides a 2.4% inflationary adjustment to offset increased energy and health care costs
- funds enrollment of 25,000 additional students
- restores \$52 million in cuts to essential student services programs targeted at disabled and economically disadvantaged students and programs serving small business
- rejects the proposed elimination of the Competitive Cal Grant program, which provides grants to 42,000 community college students with an average income under \$17,000

On behalf of El Camino College, we support a balanced approach to solve our state's budget problem while avoiding devastating cuts. While the specific tax solutions and other revenue proposals will be decided by policy leaders who understand the implications for California's economy, the Conference Committee's plan demonstrates how a balanced approach can protect essential education services.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Fallo
Superintendent/President

Similar letters sent to: Assemblyman Hector De La Torre Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas
Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally Assemblyman Warren Furutani
Assemblyman Currin Price Senator Jenny Oropeza
Assemblyman Ted Lieu Senator Edward Vincent
Scot Lay, Community College League of California



**EL CAMINO COLLEGE
DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

August 12, 2008

TO: Dr. Thomas Fallo
FROM: Barbara Perez
SUBJECT: Information on Board Queries

Here is information on the purchase orders that were questioned at the Board meeting:

200051 – Pacific Parking – annual maintenance agreement for the parking permit machines.

210121 – Roy's Flower Garden – purchase replacement parts for lawn mowers and edgers as needed. Work is performed by the Auto Shop.

105134 – Calmet – They provide our trash and roll off service. This PO was for services rendered in May. Last year they issued individual PO's for each month, this year they have initiated a blanket PO for the service.

There was a question on the Carpet and Flooring (Bid No, 2008-4). Our current contract with C & A Floorcoverings, Inc. expired on June 30, 2008. Because Capistrano Unified School District had negotiated a cooperative purchasing provision in their contract, El Camino College elected to utilize that provision rather than opening the bid process based on the quality of the work done. While the need varies year to year, we have spent \$31,600 and \$47,682 for carpet and flooring in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, respectively.



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**

**INFORMATIONAL
BULLETIN # 27**

9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, California 90242-2890 • (562) 922-6111

Darline P. Robles, Ph.D., *superintendent*

RECEIVED

AUG - 5 2008

July 31, 2008

TO: Superintendents and Presidents
Members of Governing Boards
Los Angeles County School and Community College Districts

FROM: Daniel G. Villanueva, Secretary
Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization
and
Assistant Director
Regionalized Business Services
Division of Business Advisory Services

SUBJECT: Nominations for Membership to the Los Angeles
County Committee on School District Organization

The Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee) is an 11 member body charged by the legislature with responsibilities in the area of school district organization, unification, formation, boundary changes, the manner in which governing board members are elected, and the establishment and abolition of trustee areas. The County Committee is comprised of two members representing each of the five supervisorial districts, plus one member elected at-large.

VACANCIES ON THE COUNTY COMMITTEE

Vacancies to be Filled By Election

In October 2008, the following three terms of office on the County Committee (four years each) will expire:

- Mr. John Nunez (**First Supervisorial District**);
- Mr. Frank Bostrom (**Fourth Supervisorial District**); and
- Mr. Maurice Kunkel (**Fifth Supervisorial District**).

Per Education Code provisions, these seats will be filled by an election. Therefore, the County Committee is requesting that the governing board of **each** school and community college district submit nominations for membership on the County Committee to fill these three seats.

(Over)

- A governing board wishing to submit a nomination(s) must send the name(s) of the nominee(s), accompanied by a biographical sketch, not to exceed **200 words**, to the address below by **August 22, 2008**:

Ms. Mary Bracamontes
Division of Business Advisory Services
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890

- Nominations may also be made from the floor during the annual meeting at which time the election of the new members takes place. Residency requirements and the nominee's willingness to serve must first be validated.

ELECTION PROCESS

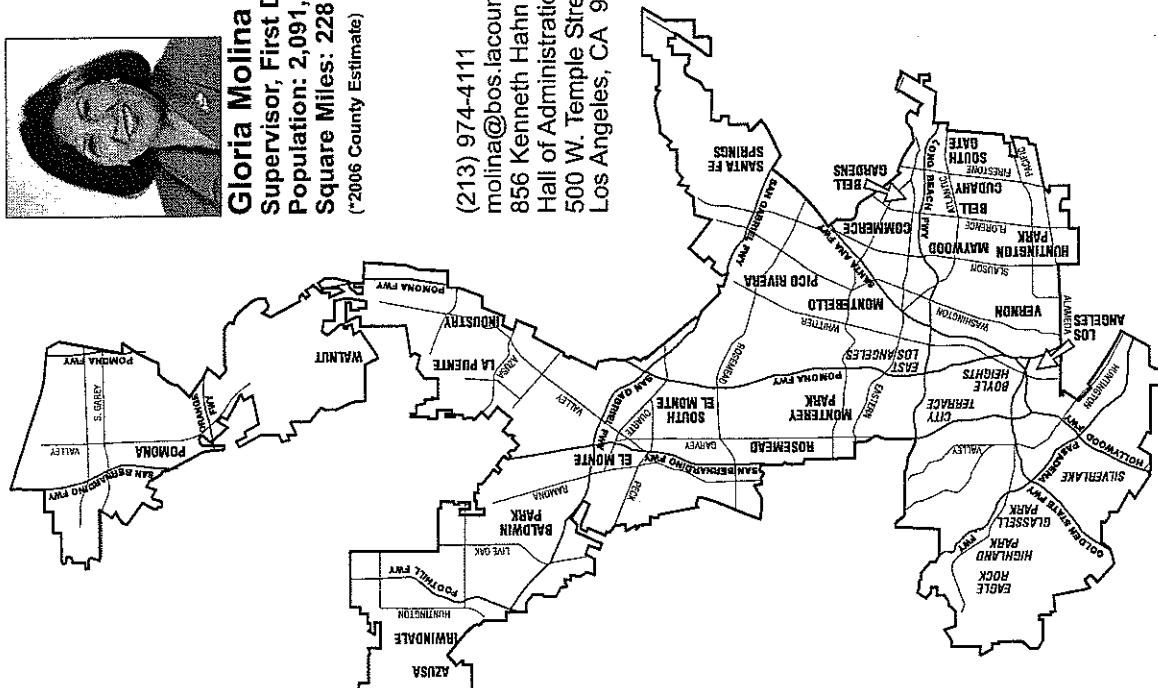
- The election of the new members to the County Committee will take place at an annual meeting of the voting representatives of the governing boards of school and community college districts called for that purpose.
- The annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the fall meeting of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association in **October 2008**.
- **The election is an at-large election.** The voting representative from **each** district governing board will cast a vote for **each** vacant position. It is **not** necessary for a district to fall within the boundaries of a supervisorial district where a vacancy exists in order to make a nomination or to cast a vote.
- The person from your district entitled to vote at the annual meeting is the person selected by your board pursuant to Education Code (EC) §35023 (K-12 school districts) or EC §72403 (community college districts).
- The voting representative may opt to vote by using an absentee ballot in lieu of casting a vote at the annual meeting. **The use of an absentee ballot is the preferred method.**
- Your district's voting representative will receive biographical materials on the candidates and voting instructions approximately one month prior to the meeting. An "Absentee Ballot Form" will also be provided at that time to districts desiring to utilize this method of voting in lieu of attending the annual meeting to cast a vote.

First Supervisorial District Map



Gloria Molina
Supervisor, First District
Population: 2,091,996*
Square Miles: 228
(*2006 County Estimate)

(213) 974-4111
molina@bos.lacounty.gov
856 Kenneth Hahn
Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012



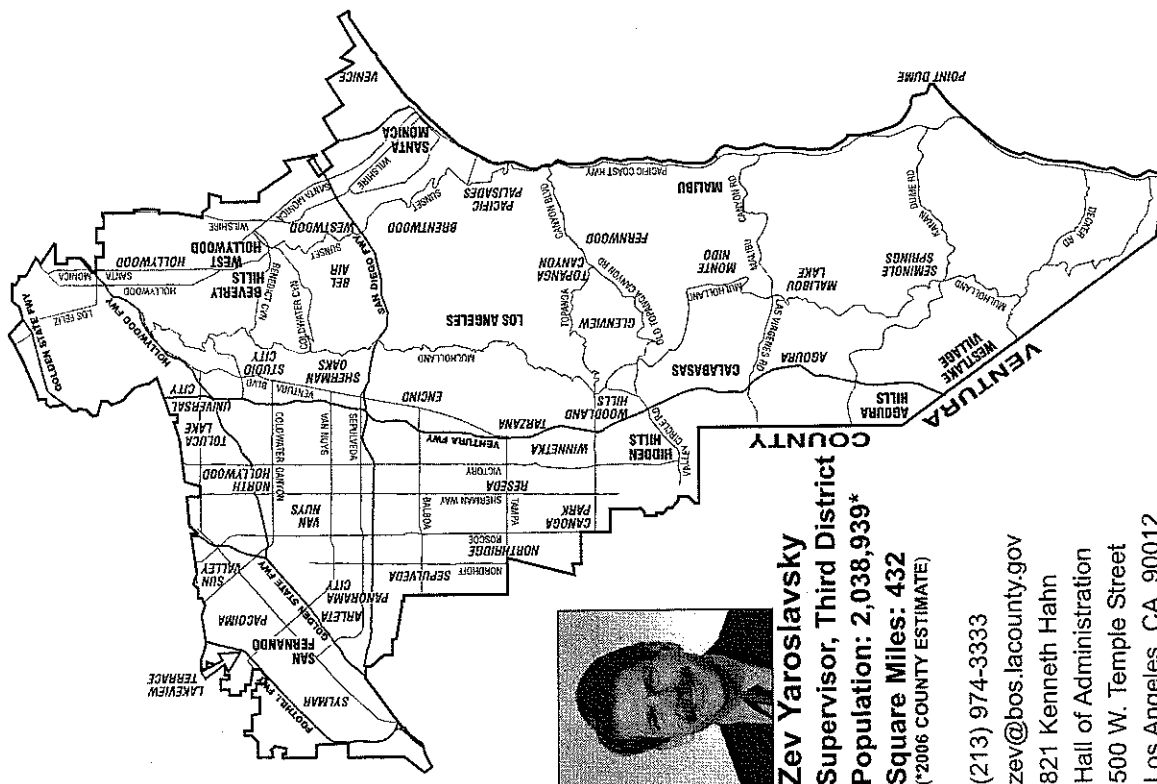
Cities and Communities Within The First District

Cities	Unincorporated Areas	Los Angeles City
Azusa	Avocado Heights	Boyle Heights
Baldwin Park	Bandini (islands)	Chinatown
Bell	Bassett	Downtown
Bell Gardens	Citrus (Covina islands)	Eagle Rock
Commerce	(portion)	Echo Park
Cudahy	East Azusa (islands)	El Sereno
El Monte	(portion)	Expo Park (portion)
Huntington Park	East Los Angeles:	Glassell Park
Industry	Belvedere Gardens	Highland Park
Irwindale	City Terrace	Lincoln Heights
La Puente	Eastmont	Little Tokyo
Los Angeles (portion)	Firestone (portion)	Los Feliz (portion)
Maywood	Florence (portion)	Silverlake (portion)
Montebello	Graham (portion)	Westlake (portion)
Monterey Park	Hacienda Heights	Wholesale District
Pico Rivera	(portion)	(portion)
Pomona	Los Nietos (portion)	
Rosemead	North Claremont	
Santa Fe Springs	(islands) (portion)	
South El Monte	Rowland Heights	
South Gate	(portion)	
Vernon	South San Gabriel	
Walnut	South San Jose Hills	
	South Whittier (portion)	
	Sunshine Acres	
	Valinda	
	Walnut Park	
	West Puente Valley	
	West Whittier (portion)	
	Whittier Narrows	

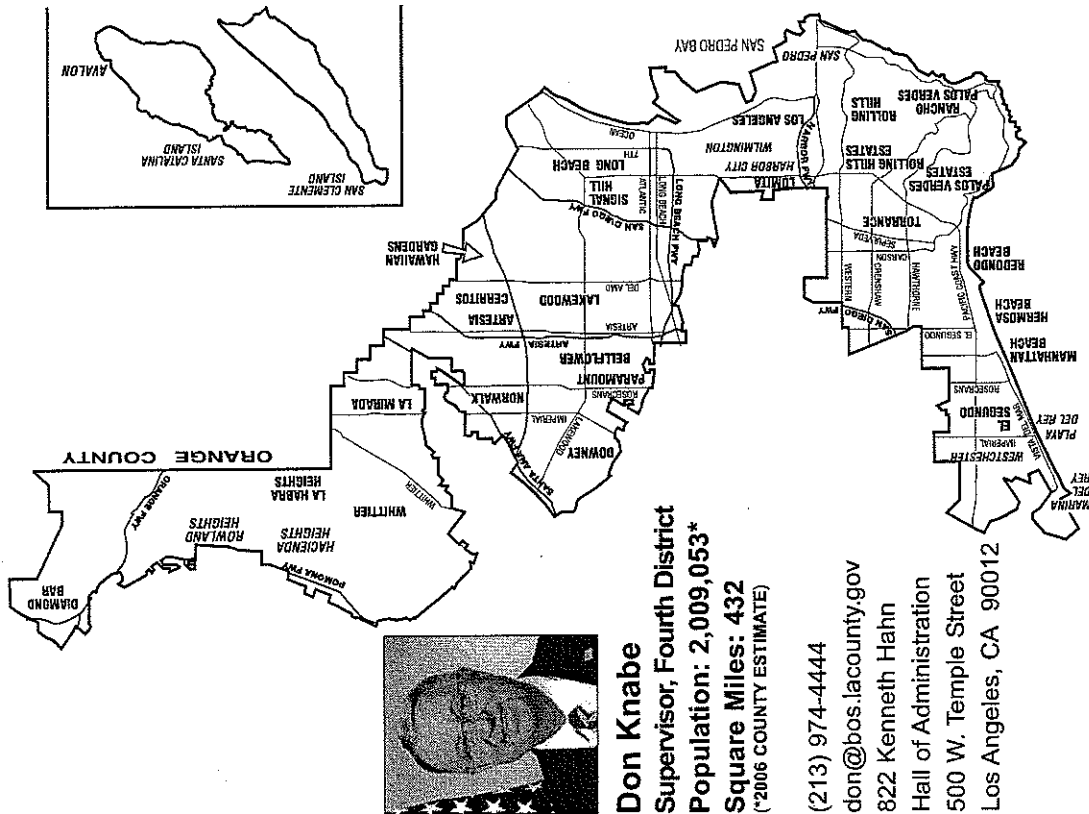
Cities and Communities Within The Third District

Cities	Unincorporated Areas	
Agoura Hills	Agoura	Seminole Hot Springs
Beverly Hills	Calabasas (adjacent)	Sunset Mesa
Calabasas	Calabasas Highlands	Triunfo Canyon
Hidden Hills	Franklin Canyon	Topanga Canyon
Los Angeles (portion)	Malibu Vista	Fernwood
Malibu	Mulholland Corridor	Glenview
San Fernando	Cornell	Sylvia Park
Santa Monica	Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon	Topanga
West Hollywood	Malibu Lake	Universal City
Westlake Village	Malibu Bowl	Veterans Administration Center
	Malibu Highlands	West Chatsworth (portion)
	Malibu/Sycamore Canyon	
	Monte Nido	
Los Angeles City		
Arleta	Mission Hills (portion)	Studio City
Atwater Village	Mount Olympus	Sun Valley (portion)
Bel Air	North Hills	Sunland (portion)
Benedict-Coldwater Canyons	North Hollywood	Sylmar (portion)
Beverly Glen	Northridge	Tarzana
Brentwood	Pacific Palisades	Toluca Lake
Canoga Park (portion)	Pacoima	Valley Glen
Chatsworth (portion)	Palms (portion)	Valley Village
Encino	Panorama City	Van Nuys
Hancock Park	Park La Brea	Venice (portion)
Hollywood (portion)	Rancho Park	Warner Center
Lake Balboa	Reseda	West Los Angeles
Lakeview Terrace	Sawtelle (portion)	Westwood
Los Feliz (portion)	Sepulveda	Wilshire Center (portion)
Miracle Mile (portion)	Sherman Oaks	Winnetka
	Silverlake (portion)	Woodland Hills

Third Supervisorial District Map



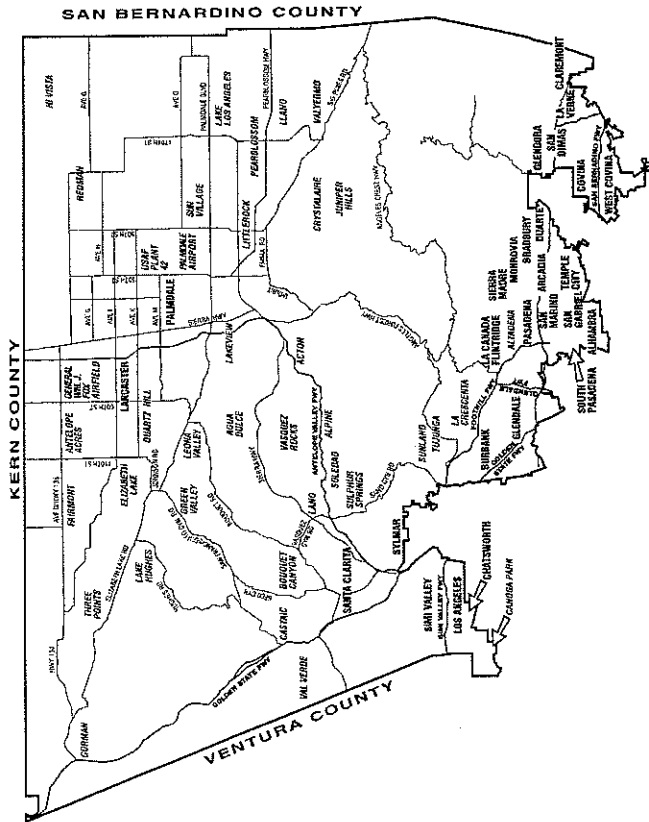
Fourth Supervisorial District Map



Cities and Communities Within The Fourth District

Cities	Unincorporated Areas	Los Angeles City
Artesia	East Whittier	Harbor City
Avalon	Hacienda Heights	Playa del Rey
Bellflower	(portion)	San Pedro
Cerritos	La Rambla	Westchester (portion)
Diamond Bar	Long Beach (islands)	Wilmington
Downey	Los Cerritos Wetlands	
El Segundo	Los Nietos (portion)	
Hawaiian Gardens	Marina del Rey	
Hermosa Beach	(portion)	
La Habra Heights	Northeast Whittier	
La Mirada	(portion)	
Lakewood	Norwalk/Cerritos	
Lomita	(islands) (portion)	
Long Beach	Northwest Whittier	
Los Angeles (portion)	Rowland Heights	
Manhattan Beach	(portion)	
Norwalk	San Clemente Island	
Palos Verdes Estates	Santa Catalina Island	
Paramount	South Whittier (portion)	
Rancho Palos Verdes	West Carson (portion)	
Redondo Beach	West Whittier (portion)	
Rolling Hills	Westfield	
Rolling Hills Estates		
Signal Hill		
Torrance		
Whittier		

Fifth Supervisorial District Map



Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor, Fifth District
Population: 2,092,704*
Square Miles: 2,838
 (*705 COUNTY ESTIMATE)

(213) 974-5555
FifthDistrict@jacbos.org
 869 Kenneth Hahn
 Hall of Administration
 500 W. Temple Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Cities and Communities Within The Fifth District

Cities

Alhambra
 Arcadia
 Bradbury
 Burbank
 Claremont
 Covina
 Duarte
 Glendale
 Glendora
 La Canada-Flintridge
 La Verne
 Lancaster
 Los Angeles (portion)
 Monrovia
 Palmdale
 Pasadena
 San Dimas
 San Gabriel
 San Marino
 Santa Clarita
 Sierra Madre
 South Pasadena
 Temple City
 West Covina

Los Angeles City

Canoga Park (portion)
 Chatsworth (portion)
 Granada Hills
 Mission Hills (portion)
 Olive View Hospital
 (in Sylmar)
 Porter Ranch
 Sunland (portion)
 Sun Valley (portion)
 Tujunga

Unincorporated Areas

Acton
 Agua Dulce
 Alpine
 Altadena
 Antelope Acres
 Big Pine
 Bouquet Canyon
 Canyon Country
 Castaic
 Castaic Junction
 Charter Oak (islands)
 Citrus (Covina islands)
 (portion)
 Crystalline
 Deer Lake Highlands
 Del Sur
 East Azusa (islands)
 (portion)
 East Pasadena
 East San Gabriel
 El Dorado
 Elizabeth Lake
 Fairmont
 Forrest Park
 Glendora (islands)
 Gorman
 Green Valley
 Hi Vista
 Juniper Hills
 Kagel Canyon
 Kinneola Mesa
 La Crescenta
 Lake Hughes
 Lake Los Angeles
 Lakeview
 Lang
 Leona Valley
 Littlerock
 Llano
 Longview
 Mint Canyon
 Monrovia/Arcadia/
 Duarte (islands)

Monroze
 Neenach
 North Claremont
 (islands) (portion)
 Northeast San Dimas
 (islands)
 Oat Mountain
 Pearblossom
 Placerita Canyon
 Quartz Hill
 Redman
 Roosevelt
 San Pasqual
 Saugus
 Soledad
 Stevenson Ranch
 Sulphur Springs
 Sunland/Sylmar/
 Tujunga (adjacent)
 Sun Village
 Three Points
 Twin Lakes
 Val Verde
 Valencia
 Valyermo
 Vasquez Rocks
 West Arcadia (islands)
 West Chatsworth
 (portion)
 West Pomona (islands)
 White Fence Farms
 Wilsona Gardens
 Wrightwood