

Butte College cuts elder education program

OrovilleMR.com

By MEGAN McCOURT - Staff Intern
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Tears rolled off the weathered cheeks of many residents Thursday at the WindChime Assisted Living Community in Chico after their last exercise class with Cory Williams.

"They just love him," said Blair Holcomb, activities director at WindChime. "He's a part of our WindChime family."

For the past eight years, Williams has been teaching physical education classes through the Butte Community College older adult education program. Every morning, five days a week, Williams would be at WindChime to lead seniors in basic physical activity.

The highlight of the week would come on Tuesday afternoons when Williams scheduled games of noodle ball — volleyball with a balloon.

"You don't usually see the residents get that noisy and excited unless they're playing noodle ball," Holcomb said. "It's like they're teenagers again."

However, all of that has come to an end.

Due to the severe budget crisis and a 12 percent enrollment increase, Butte College has had to cut a variety of programs, including its older adult education. Thursday was the last day for the program.

Ken Meier, vice president for learning and economic development at Butte, said that a combination of more students, less funding and a directive from Jack Scott, chancellor of California Community Colleges, led to the decision to cut the older adult education.

Participants in the program didn't have to pay a dime for their classes, though the state repaid the college 70 percent of the credits.

However, the faculty that taught in the program was paid at the same rate as other instructors.

Meier called it "good business sense" to cease teaching the program, which was ultimately hurting the college financially, especially with the need to chop more than \$4 million from the school's 2009-10 budget.

In addition, the directive sent by the chancellor outlined that community colleges need to focus on their core classes like English, math and science.

Besides cutting the older adults program, Butte has also temporarily frozen its travel and tourism program, the machine shop program, and an equestrian program. In addition, it is considering shutting down an infant/toddler program.

"All of our programs are important," Meier said, "but our first responsibility is to accept traditional-age students who are going to have a great deal of difficulty finding classes as it is."

Community colleges have been hit hard by the recession, as their enrollment has jumped and they will be receiving less money from the state. When school starts this fall, there will be 250,000 full-time community college students in California who won't be able to find a single class to take, Meier said.

Many of those students may be wandering around Butte College in August, hoping to score a seat in a packed classroom.

"The majority of students have enrolled now, but we always have 1,000-2,000 walk-ins who think they can come in and get what they want, when they want it," he said.

That problem may grow even worse if Butte cannot find enough teachers to staff core classes.

After laying off faculty — including 13 part-time teachers from the older adults program — Meier is scrambling to find people to teach subjects like English, biology, chemistry, meteorology and reading. There is currently an advertisement on National Public Radio looking for qualified instructors.

Only one teacher from the older adult program was able to keep her job since she was a tenured faculty member who had been teaching in the program for more than 20 years.

Meier said it broke his heart to cut the program and the college believes in supporting the community when it can afford to, but by eliminating the older adult education, they were able to shift thousands of dollars to the core program.

"We're facing a situation where millions have been cut from our budget," Meier said. "This just happened to be a program that brings in little or no income and is just not as high priority as English, biology or chemistry sections for college prep."

Although the senior citizens served by the program may not have been on their way to a four-year university, many think they should be provided with educational opportunities as well.

Kim Vickers had been teaching music and cooking classes at Windsor Chico Creek Care and Rehabilitation nursing home for eight years before the program was canceled. She said it was a shame that Butte will not be using state funding to support the program any longer.

"You can't believe the difference we make when we go in and teach these people these classes," she said. "This is affecting hundreds of elderly people in the community who really need education, fitness, art and music."

Vickers and her 9-year-old Maltese mix, Jojo, are regulars at the nursing home. She said many people look forward to their visits and they usually draw a crowd when she comes to teach her "voc-aerobics" musical exercise class.

Next Thursday, Vickers and others from the older adult program will have a meeting with the contract education department at Butte to see if the program could be modified enough to turn a profit and continue in the future. Vickers hopes to see the program rebound and continue spreading joy and good will.

"When you're 96-years-old and feel like you're getting an opportunity to learn things, it's a very positive thing," she said.

Centinela board fires asst. superintendent at its meeting

The Daily Breeze

By Douglas Morino Staff Writer

Posted: 07/30/2009 08:11:31 PM PDT

Diane Fiello's homecoming came to an end this week.

Fiello, a South Bay native and the assistant superintendent of educational services at the Centinela Valley Union High School District, was dismissed from her position by the school board Wednesday, much to the dismay of many in attendance.

Upon hearing of her termination, Fiello asked board members for an explanation.

"There is a protocol for dismissing an assistant superintendent that must be followed," Fiello, clearly agitated, said after the Board of Education announced it had voted 3-1 in favor of her termination. "There has to be some writing involved."

Board members and Superintendent Jose Fernandez did not comment on the decision, citing laws that prohibit public debate of internal personnel matters.

"There is a time and place for that discussion, and this is not it," board President Gloria Ramos said.

Fiello remained in her seat for a short time. Then she gathered her belongings, briefly looked over the audience and walked out the door.

The president of the Centinela Valley teachers union voiced frustration over Fiello's departure.

"The administrator with the most experience, the only one who went through a competitive hiring process, is the one being let go tonight," Erik Carlstone, an English teacher at Leuzinger High School, told board members. "Why is that?"

Several students who waited to speak publicly also protested Fiello's dismissal.

"She's done a great job in this district," said Adrian Castro, the incoming student body president at Lawndale High. "She's a public employee, and we have a right to know why she was let go."

"I'm concerned with curriculum in the district," board member Rocio Pizano said in response to the public outcry. "It needs improvement and we are working on that."

Fiello, who earned \$143,000 annually, is a product of Centinela Valley schools. She graduated from Hawthorne High School in 1968 and spent a decade as education services superintendent at Culver City Unified before she was named to the same post at Centinela Valley.

She attended El Camino and Marymount colleges before receiving master's and doctorate degrees in education from Pepperdine.

Fiello was named to the upper-management position at Centinela Valley in March 2008 at a time when district officials were navigating through financial hardship and looking to rebuild high-level staffing.

The district will buy out the remainder of her contract.

Board members announced Fiello's termination as well as other personnel moves - including new principals were for Leuzinger and Lawndale high schools - after returning from a closed session lasting four hours.

Raul Carranza was named to the top post at Leuzinger and Damon Dragos was named as Lawndale's new principal.

Dragos replaces Vicente Bravo, who was named director of curriculum and instruction for the district. Bravo was principal at Lawndale for three years and replaces Debbie Johnson, who has left Centinela Valley.

Fiello could not be reached for further comment. A replacement has yet to be named.

Outside the meeting, board President Gloria Ramos did not comment on her dismissal.

"We're trying to make the best moves possible for our students," she said.

College board will announce appointee to fill seat next month

New member will replace Dr. Willie O. Jones, recently elected to City Council

By Cheryl Scott
Bulletin Staff Writer

The Compton Community College District is in the process of selecting someone to fill the vacant board of trustees seat emptied late last month when Dr. Willie O. Jones was elected to the City Council.

The appointee will serve until the next regularly scheduled election for governing board members, which is set for Nov. 3.

The seat has been empty since Jones left his post in late June, when he was sworn in as the next 4th District councilperson.

Applications from interested parties were accepted through Monday. Interviews are slated for July 30 at 4 p.m. in the Compton Community College District Board Room. It is hoped that the appointment will be made on Aug. 14.

So far, only one individual has applied for the position, Special Trustee Peter Landsberger said late last week.

"We are expecting at least two or three applicants, if the rumblings I've heard are true," Landsberger told *The Bulletin*. "Names of all applicants will be kept a matter of public record at the office of the provost. We are being completely open and transparent. No one will be able to say that the appointment is a part of a backroom deal. We are completely naked."

"We are looking for someone who is sensitive to our unique situation," said Special Trustee Peter Landsberger

Candidates must be at least 18 years old, a registered voter and a resident of the district and Trustee Area 1, which includes the city of Compton.

The board currently has only two members, Andres Ramos and Lorraine Cervantes. Two members were lost when the college lost its accreditation in 2007. Those members will be replaced in the election in November. The new appointed member will also have to run for election if he or she wishes to retain the seat.

"The board normally has five members," Landsberger said. "The state education code dictates that in case of a vacancy, a new board member must be appointed within 60 days. That didn't happen in this case (the aftermath of losing accreditation) because we were in crisis at the time. But the partnership with El Camino is working out very well, and things have settled down. It's time to get the board up to its full membership."

The college is operating under a partnership agreement with El Camino Community College, an arrangement made possible by a state Assembly bill enacted into law in order to keep the facility open. It is now

a part of El Camino. The district and El Camino are both working toward re-establishing Compton Community College under its own accreditation.

"We are looking for someone who is sensitive to our unique situation," Landsberger said. "It is important that the new member understand the role of the board and the special trustee, and understand that working toward accreditation is a process."

Qualifications and responsibilities include fully participating; knowing about the communities served by Compton Center and acting on their behalf and for their benefit; maintaining a commitment to community colleges and their missions; balancing the needs of many diverse groups; contributing to and building consensus and effective board functions, and supporting the authority of the board as a whole.

The board of trustees is currently operating without authority. The special trustee performs the duties of the board.

"Even though the board does not have the legal authority to make decisions, it is still a very important element to the Compton Community College District and to the college itself," Landsberger said. "I listen very closely to the board on all issues."

"We are working toward the day when we will not have a special trustee and the board will have its full powers restored."

Jones was noted for his consistent support of the college and being well-prepared and articulate, the special trustee said.

"He is a perfect example of how a board member can influence policy at the college. He is well respected in the community," Landsberger said. "I certainly listened to his advice and took heed of it. In the future the board will receive an increasing amount of authority, so it's important that the new member be highly qualified."

Community college district pays outgoing chancellor \$428,750 in severance

LA Times

July 31, 2009

The Los Angeles Community College District will pay outgoing Chancellor Marshall E. Drummond \$428,750 in the wake of his unexpected departure, officials said today.

Drummond, 67, was placed on a leave of absence in June, and weeks later, the district announced he would be leaving with 23 months remaining on his \$354,408-a-year contract. The separation pact contains a confidentiality clause stating that neither Drummond nor district officials, including the Board of Trustees, can disclose the reason for the payment agreement.

"The parties recognize and agree that they each have significant accomplishments, that they have a mutual interest in respecting each other's professional reputations and that they will not engage in disparaging comments to others," the agreement says.

Drummond will also keep lifetime health insurance and retirement benefits, and his severance will be paid out over 19 months, the agreement said.

The district's chancellor from 1999 to 2004, Drummond left to head the statewide California Community College office in Sacramento before returning to Los Angeles in 2007. He was credited with spearheading passage of a series of construction bond measures totaling \$5.7 billion that are financing a major green building program at the district's nine campuses.

His departure comes at a time of deep funding cuts and explosive enrollment growth for community colleges as the recession drives laid-off workers and students priced out of universities back to the schools.

Two of the district's nine campuses, Los Angeles City College and Los Angeles Trade Technical, were placed on probation last month by an accreditation commission. The district educates 135,000 students.

Community colleges gaining respect, admissions

SFGate.com

Glen Martin

Sunday, August 2, 2009

Huge oaks in full leaf, broad greenswards punctuated with rose gardens, stately brick buildings - it looks like any well-funded, exclusive private college. But appearances deceive in this case: Santa Rosa Junior College is one of California's most accessible institutions of higher learning. And like all community colleges in the Bay Area and state, it is becoming increasingly popular with people from all backgrounds.

Because of their emphasis on job skill development and professional certification programs, community colleges have been the traditional province of working people. But as the recession bites deeper, many middle- and upper-class youths are finding their entree to exclusive private colleges or prestigious public universities limited by depleted family funds. The community colleges have become a practical option for the first two years of study for a bachelor's degree.

Jack Scott, the California Community Colleges chancellor and past president of Cypress College and Pasadena City College, cites the tuition cost differential between the first two undergraduate years at the University of Southern California and two years at nearby Pasadena City College.

"Assuming that you're taking transferable courses at Pasadena, you can go to USC your junior year after spending no more than \$1,200 total tuition for your freshman and sophomore years," Scott said. "That's compared with roughly \$50,000 for the initial two years of tuition at USC. If you lived at home while attending Pasadena, your savings were even greater."

Community college cost efficiencies were certainly apparent to Steven Rich, a physician and the director of internal medicine at Kaiser Permanente in Santa Rosa. And, he said, they were deeply appreciated. But savings weren't the primary reason his two eldest children went to Santa Rosa Junior College.

The family had saved enough money to send the kids to universities, Rich said, but both seemed somewhat insecure about leaving home - and he and his wife didn't want to push them. By going to Santa Rosa Junior College, they were able to stay at home for the first two years of their college careers. Additionally, Rich said, the school had an excellent reputation.

"The emphasis was on teaching," he said. "The classes were smaller, and the kids were taught by primary instructors, not teaching assistants. They received a great deal of individualized attention."

Each of Rich's children spent two years at Santa Rosa Junior College. His son Scott recently graduated Phi Beta Kappa from San Francisco State University, and daughter Jamie transferred her junior year to UC Davis.

The increasing reliance by all economic classes on California's community colleges represents a major shift in cultural perspective. Until recently, it was outre to attend a state two-year school, which, unlike the University of California and California State University schools, cannot restrict enrollment. For decades, California's community college system was the Rodney Dangerfield of state higher education; it has never been accorded mere respect, let alone prestige.

"It has always been a major frustration," said Lorraine Wilson, the dean of career and technical education for Santa Rosa Junior College. "Given the opportunities we provide and the dedication and work of both staff and students, it is disheartening when community colleges are treated as a joke."

Reputation notwithstanding, the community colleges have always done yeoman's service for the state. California's community colleges constitute the largest educational system in the United States. There are 109 colleges total, serving more than 2.6 million students. That compares with fewer than 500,000 students for California state universities and about 215,000 for the University of California. California's community colleges, in short, are largely responsible for educating the state's citizens beyond high school.

And just as the community colleges are having to gear up to meet the requirements of the increasing numbers of youths from upper-income families planning to transfer to four-year schools, they are also expanding their programs in basic English and math.

"It's no secret that the state's secondary schools have dropped the ball somewhere along the way," said City College of San Francisco Chancellor Don Griffin. "They're starting to address that, but they're still playing catch-up. As a result, 75 percent of our students are at the ninth-grade level or below in math or English. Remediation necessarily has become a major focus for us."

Still, community college graduates who ultimately go on to illustrious careers are legion - Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a graduate of Santa Monica College, is a case in point. Additionally, the colleges continue to emphasize credential programs for working people. Without the certification courses available in the community colleges, California would be largely bereft of nurses, physician's assistants, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, police officers, machinists and skilled plumbers, welders and cooks.

Holders of associate degrees have average lifetime earnings of \$1.6 million - \$400,000 more than the earnings of a high school graduate. In San Francisco especially, it is the local community college that is the driving engine for higher education.

"We currently have about 105,000 students annually, taking both credit and noncredit courses," said Martha Lucey Olchowy, City College of San Francisco's dean of marketing and public information. "That means that in any given year, we're serving about 1 in 7 San Franciscans."

California's community college students tend to be older than undergraduates at four-year schools. At Santa Rosa Junior College, the average age is 35; at City College of San Francisco, it's 32. This fact, educators say, makes for a more focused, industrious student body; people are

there to achieve, not party. Goals are diverse, though the emphasis often is on pragmatic courses of study that do not necessarily involve transfer to a four-year school.

Historically, observed Pamela Burdman, an education program officer with the Hewlett Foundation whose expertise includes two-year colleges, the state's goal was to transfer the top one-eighth of community college graduates to the University of California, with the top one-third of the remaining students going to state universities. The current plan, she said, is to increase that transfer rate.

Yet Burdman emphasizes that certification programs of two years or less are at least as important to fulfilling the community college mission as a high transfer rate to four-year universities.

"It is clear that an educated workforce is essential to the state's economy," said Burdman, "and community colleges are assuming a major portion of the load. Vocational training and certification are now required for almost any well-compensated job. So the challenge is to get students to complete their programs, to obtain their certificates, no matter what the field of study."

The immediate problem facing the state's community colleges is predictable: money. The California economy is in the doldrums, and the fiscal crisis in Sacramento has become perennial. As workers lose their jobs, many are seeking classes at their community colleges to improve their prospects. Just when the demand on the colleges is spiking, funding is being slashed.

City College of San Francisco, for example, will lose about \$25 million in state funding from its annual budget of \$195 million. The sting will be mitigated to a small degree by a recent \$930,000 federal "green job" economic stimulus grant, but significant reductions are inevitable. Though the colleges can't legally restrict enrollment, they can reduce the number of programs and classes. This year, summer classes at CCSF have been cut by 10 percent; next year, said Peter Goldstein, the college's vice chancellor of finance, summer classes will probably be cut by 85 percent. Eight hundred of the 9,800 classes offered during the upcoming regular school year will be eliminated.

Additionally, said City College Chancellor Griffin, student requests for financial aid have never been higher. Twenty years ago, Griffin said, students requiring financial support at CCSF were very much the exception. Now, about one-third of all students receive aid.

"I've worked at this school in various positions for 40 years, and I can't recall a period of comparable difficulty," Griffin said. "We are truly in desperate straits."

Griffin caused a stir a few weeks ago when he suggested in an interview with Chronicle reporter Nanette Asimov that private donations could be used to support classes at the school. But Milton Marks, the president of the school's board of trustees, said the idea should not be dismissed out of hand.

"It's provocative, but it warrants consideration," Marks said. "My philosophy is that a public institution should be supported at an appropriate level with public funds. But (in CCSF's) case,

we're going to have to cut classes at our current funding level. If we want to close that gap, we'll need private donations."

Whatever the case, the community colleges will endure, state Chancellor Scott said. They have to - they remain the bulwark of California's postsecondary educational system, functioning simultaneously as the first rung of the ladder and the last great hope for millions of Californians.

"Obviously, we'll have to trim budgets and classes - maybe by as much as 10 percent," Scott said. "That's regrettable. But we'll still transfer thousands of students to four-year schools, and we'll still provide certification courses for thousands more. Our doors are staying open."

Got a Problem? the President Has Office Hours

The Chronicle of Higher Education

August 10, 2009

By Ashley C. Killough

When Corrie E. Brite left the president's office at Bradley University late one night last semester, she wondered if she had just wasted her time.

Mikhail Gorbachev was coming to town for a dinner, and Ms. Brite, a junior majoring in political science and history, wanted desperately to attend. Having exhausted all other options to get a ticket, she decided the university president might be her "in." So after class she scrambled to make President Joanne K. Glasser's monthly office hours. She arrived 15 minutes late—but, to her surprise, the president welcomed her anyway.

"I told her it would make my life if I could go to this dinner," Ms. Brite says. "He's a world leader. The chances of seeing him again are zero." While Ms. Glasser said she would try to help, Ms. Brite walked away skeptically. "I thought, 'She's Bradley's president. I'm sure she has better things to do than find tickets for students.'"

A week later, Ms. Brite received an e-mail invitation to the Peoria, Ill., dinner, as did 14 other students.

While it's unclear just how many presidents hold office hours, the practice has become a popular way for students on some campuses to communicate with a top administrator. The meetings give students a chance to voice comments, concerns, and requests—and sometimes shoot for that coveted recommendation letter—while allowing busy presidents some manageable one-on-one time with their largest constituency.

While it's common for presidents to meet regularly with student representatives, says W.H. (Butch) Oxendine, executive director of the American Student Government Association, he has never heard of open office hours for students in general.

"Some presidents are very hands-on and are seen around campus, and some are hands-off. It depends on the institution," he says. "The bigger the name and the bigger the enrollment, the less likely the president will be around much."

About 100 students have shown up at Ms. Glasser's office since the hours began, in February. Once a month, she opens her doors for about two hours, in late afternoon or early evening. Some have waited in line for more than an hour. From the waiting room, a staff member knocks on the door every five minutes, signaling the president to wrap things up and move on to the next student.

The students want to talk about a wide range of things, Ms. Glasser says, from academic struggles to career advice to broken printers. Because the president went public with her diagnosis of breast cancer last year, many students come in to discuss the fight against the disease within their own families.

"Holding office hours demystifies, to a certain extent, the president's office," she says. "It's absolutely critical and vital to stay in touch with students. It's the whole reason for being here. I look at these office hours as one of the most important things I can do."

It helps that Bradley is a private university with about 5,000 undergraduates—just the right size to develop numerous relationships with students, she adds.

"She's around a lot more than the previous president," Ms. Brite says of Ms. Glasser. "I don't even remember the name of the man who was here before her."

The Fund-Raising Obstacle

Responsible for balancing various tasks and pleasing multiple constituencies, university presidents face growing demands that can pull them in competing directions. For many, says Ronald K. Machtley, president of Bryant University, in Rhode Island, the pressure to raise money often overrides time commitments with students.

When college presidents undertake major fund-raising campaigns, he says, "you can't spend only 30 percent of your time on the road and be successful. Big donors want to see the president."

But he knows students, too, want to see the president. A former member of Congress, Mr. Machtley says his time on Capitol Hill prepared him to deal with the needs of different groups. A university president has to figure out how to make an impact and be visible without seeming superficial, he says.

"I know a president who claimed to have slept in college dorms," if only for one night at a time, he says.

While he doesn't hold office hours, Mr. Machtley reaches out to students by eating meals in the cafeteria, inviting students to his house for picnics, and leading them on overseas trips. Presidents play a vital role in "setting the tone and standard" for student behavior, but the immense weight of fund raising often dilutes the importance of that job, he says.

Generational experiences may also be a factor in the usual disconnect between presidents and students, Mr. Machtley says. In the 1960s, what he calls a "rancorous, offensive" time, students didn't act the same way as the students he knows now do.

"My generation was taking over campuses and declaring we were all-knowing, and administrators were not revered," says Mr. Machtley, who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1970. "Now the pendulum has swung a little bit. Administrators are realizing students are different than they were in the 60s. Today the kids are really wonderful, courteous, and thankful for anything you do for them."

Of the four careers he's had—he was also a lawyer and a naval officer—Mr. Machtley says being a university president has been the most rewarding: "While raising a lot of money can be a capstone to a career, if presidents miss the interaction with students, they miss the essence of the job."

Open-Door Policy

For Janet Morgan Riggs, who was a faculty member before becoming president of Gettysburg College, holding office hours for students feels natural. She finds the experience inspiring and says it keeps her grounded and focused. "If I'm having a little bit of a down day," she says, "it lifts me right up."

While the open-door policy she had as a professor in the psychology department no longer applies, she tries to meet with students once a month for an hour or two. Since she began doing so, in February, Ms. Riggs estimates that 25 to 30 students total have attended the three sessions, each getting 10 to 15 minutes of her time.

"I have to say, every conversation I have had has just been terrific," she says. "The students who come in are well prepared. They're certainly very polite. There's no hostility."

At Bradley, Ms. Glasser, too, beams about her students, saying she has had no confrontational or disgruntled encounters. Initially her cabinet members worried about the "unknown" and "uncharted territory" of the idea, she says. "They didn't know what to expect—whether there would be two or 2,000 students."

Follow-through is important. Ms. Glasser says she has responded to every request or concern expressed by the visitors. "I didn't want students to just feel like all they had were good sessions. There needed to be credibility and substance behind the meetings."

Melanie Pagan is particularly glad she went to the president's office. Ms. Pagan, who graduated in May, was the leader of Bradley's only Latino-oriented student organization. It wanted to meet with 16 of the university's top officials to spread awareness of its work. Upon hearing the plan, Ms. Glasser made sure it happened.

Because of its efforts, the group was awarded \$1,800 by the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, an advocacy group, to attend a weeklong national conference in Chicago. With additional support from the president's office, each of the 10 students paid only \$6.40 to stay at a hotel for the week. The conference led to internship opportunities for two Bradley students.

"We had been struggling with our organization for a while. We had a lot of roadblocks," Ms. Pagan says. "After [Ms. Glasser's] help, things started falling into place. We had her back us up, and she did back us up every single time."

Without direct communication, Ms. Glasser says, it is difficult to respond to students' needs. And without office hours, she adds, she would not have made so many new friends this year. "I want each and every student to say, 'I know my president. My president knows me.'"

How a Community College Makes Room

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Scrambling to create classrooms as enrollments soar

August 2, 2009

By Eric Hoover and Robin Wilson

Baltimore County, Md.

For a long time, nobody knew where the water in the library's basement was coming from, but it was not a pressing concern. After all, most people on the Essex campus of the Community College of Baltimore County had no reason to venture into the building's windowless depths.

That will soon change, however. Administrators expect enrollment in for-credit courses to surge by as much as 20 percent over last fall, and so they have decided that the big, empty space could help ease a serious problem: The college has run out of classrooms.

This summer, workers located the source of the water (a leaking valve). Soon they will build walls, rework the ducts, and convert part of the basement into two classrooms, each with about 24 computers.

"When need dictates, you get creative," says Sandra L. Kurtinitis, the college's president.

In Baltimore, as in many places throughout the nation, demand is growing faster than two-year institutions could ever hope—or afford—to build. This fall's projected enrollment growth in the college's for-credit programs follows a 10-percent increase it saw during the last academic year. In total, the college plans to enroll nearly 24,000 students in those programs this fall. An additional 37,000 are expected in its continuing-education courses over the coming academic year, a 9-percent increase over last year.

Although the college has not experienced the kind of state cuts that have forced campuses in California and Florida to turn students away, Maryland has trimmed \$1.1-million from the college's already tight \$178-million budget. Amid a hiring slowdown, administrators have scrambled to cut costs even as they prepare to add about 190 course sections this fall. "It's a balancing act that keeps you awake at night," Ms. Kurtinitis says.

As big as the college's enrollment increases are, the numbers only begin to reveal the experiences of the people who work and study at the college's three campuses—in Catonsville, Dundalk, and Essex—and its two extension centers. For students, staff members, administrators, and instructors, the summer has brought both opportunity and uncertainty. The college offers more than 100 programs and many second chances, but in the grip of a recession, the one thing no institution can offer is a guarantee.

'A Door Out'

Frank J. Brisson has been driving trucks for nearly 20 years. He's hauled jet fuel from Baltimore to New York's John F. Kennedy airport and driven loads of canned food as far as Alaska. But last February he lost his job operating a dump truck at a local construction site. Now he wants a change.

"I've found every spot there is to find," he says of his travels as a professional driver. "I'd rather be doing something that makes me think."

This past spring, Mr. Brisson enrolled in a program at the community college that trains heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning mechanics. He wants to earn the program's two-year degree at the Catonsville campus.

Mr. Brisson, 48, is among a flood of people in the Baltimore area who enrolled at the college after they lost their jobs or spotted trouble coming. The new students want to retrain for work that is more stable, higher paying, and in greater demand. Meanwhile, the college is also seeing an increase in enrollment among veterans, who are eligible for more-generous benefits under the new GI Bill, and it is handling an influx of traditional-age students whose families cannot afford to send them to four-year institutions as they had planned.

One of the biggest gains has been among students 40 to 60 years old, who are enrolled in occupational programs like dental hygiene, computer-aided design, construction management, and physician's assistance. "A lot of students are shifting out of their old jobs and realizing: This is not a hot career anymore," says Mark Williams, director of career development at Baltimore County. "Some have been laid off and they know, I can't compete where I stand now. I need to be retooled."

Many of the students enrolling here have worked in front-line positions as office assistants, charter-bus drivers, legal aides, and teachers' helpers, jobs easily downsized

during bad economic times. Others already have degrees but have been unable to find jobs that they were trained for—or that pay well enough—and are looking for a new skill. Gina A. Strauss, an online academic adviser for the college, is getting 100 more e-mail inquiries each month than she did this time last year from people who want to know what the college offers.

Ms. Strauss answers questions by e-mail about prerequisites and helps students get started selecting courses. Last month she heard from someone who has a bachelor's degree in communications but is interested in the college's veterinary-technology program, and from a woman who has a journalism degree but is considering enrolling in the college's program in hospitality management. Ms. Strauss also got an e-mail message from a prospective student worried about the long-term stability of his current sales job; he wants to earn an associate degree in accounting.

Many of the students who enroll here have complicated lives. Mr. Brisson, the truck driver who has not worked in six months, has been sleeping in his Chevy pickup, surviving on food stamps, and using money from his retirement account to pay for his classes while he waits to hear back about his financial-aid application.

Other students are caring for sick relatives or for grandchildren whose parents have been deployed with the military. Because of all they have to deal with, most can manage to attend classes only part time. "What we have is a population that's always living on the fringe," says Sina M. Reid, a clinical counselor at the community college. "Often, this is where they come because it represents a new kind of life, a door out."

Bracing for the Fall

To open that door, new students must first talk with an academic adviser on one of the college's three campuses. Many who come to the offices are walk-ins, and for some, the visit marks the first hour they have ever spent on a college campus.

Zabrina W. Epps, an academic adviser at Catonsville, has been seeing 10 to 15 students a day. After eight hours of conversations, she leaves drained.

Over the years, Ms. Epps has covered the walls of her office with inspirational messages, from Sophocles, Lincoln, and Thoreau. ("We were born to succeed, not fail.") She also keeps a box of tissues handy; sometimes the people who sit across from her break down.

Many students, like the pregnant woman who was laid off from a small company, need help developing an academic plan.

Others are unrealistic. New students, especially those who have lost their jobs, often hope to complete their placement tests right then and there. "When I pull up a degree plan, their eyes light up," Ms. Epps says. "Then I'll ask, 'Are you prepared to do a math-level test today? What grade did you get in Algebra II?'" Then they get quiet." So, Ms. Epps often advises them to start with practice tests.

A deficiency in mathematics or reading might mean that a student cannot complete a degree as quickly as he or she hoped. Other complications may also slow them down. In recent months, Ms. Epps has talked with more people who walk in expecting to enroll as full-time students even though they have more than one job, not to mention young children and parents to care for. After listening to their stories, she explains that while the economy has changed, the process of obtaining a degree has not: It still takes at least two to three years.

"When we have that conversation," Ms. Epps says, "it hits the student that they just can't do it all."

On a Tuesday afternoon last month, nearly two dozen people were waiting outside the academic-advising office at Catonsville. There was little room to stand. "It looks like an airport," said Rich Lilley, vice president for enrollment and student services, who oversees the advisers.

This summer, Mr. Lilley has assumed the role of cheerleader, frequently stopping to give pep talks (and pizza and doughnuts) to the staff members who must counsel a constant stream of students, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. "It's difficult to deal with the 23rd student of the day the same way you dealt with the first," he says, "but that's what we have to do."

All around the campus, administrators were bracing for the fall semester, which begins August 31. On the second floor of the J Building in Catonsville, Dell Hagan Rhodes, director of student life, was considering ways to connect with the fast-growing population of adult students. Soon the college will start a mandatory seven-week orientation course, for all full- and part-time students, that will cover study skills and stress management. On Ms. Rhodes's dry-erase board was a list of long-term goals, including the development of a leadership class and a wellness program.

"If we don't get them involved in cocurricular activities," she said, "we may never see them again."

Nearby, Michael Carey, dean of continuing education and educational development, had spent the morning figuring out how the college could best prepare local residents for jobs as electrical-engineering technicians. In recent years, the college's program had shrunk as local demand for such workers declined. The recent expansion of two nearby military bases, however, will ultimately mean hundreds of new electrical-engineering jobs. So Mr. Carey has helped revamp the college's program, which he now must market—and find enough qualified instructors to fill.

"We get to be educators," Mr. Carey says, "but we have to be entrepreneurs, too."

The need for more instructors was keen in other departments. So far the number of math courses is up 17 percent over last fall, with remedial courses accounting for much of that growth; the number of science courses is up 12 percent. But the college can add courses only as fast as it can find enough adjuncts, as well as rooms for them to teach in at a particular time. "It's hard to find someone to teach science in the middle of the day," says Donna Links, dean of the School of Math and Science. "And if someone can only teach math at 10 a.m., we may have to pass."

Although the college has not resorted to layoffs or furloughs to adjust to cuts in state support, it has not filled some nonfaculty positions, requiring some employees to accept more responsibilities. That's why Melissa L. Hopp, vice president for administrative services, had to spend part of her day reviewing full-time faculty contracts—the college's human-resources director recently retired.

Ms. Hopp has overseen several cost-reduction strategies. For instance, the college expects to save at least \$25,000 in postage because the financial-aid office switched to all-electronic communications. It has collected about \$130,000 in back electric-usage fees since an employee noticed that the college had not been charging the companies that rent campus space for cellular towers. And during the Thanksgiving and winter breaks last year, the college saved almost \$100,000 by shutting off the heat in all buildings, including one where local residents hold children's plays.

"We told them they could still use it," Ms. Hopp says, "but that they should bring a sweater."

Perhaps nobody at the college was busier than Fred Schanken, the man in charge of creating classrooms out of thin air. Each day, Mr. Schanken, senior director of facilities management, visits each of the college's three campuses at least once. Since buying his Toyota pick-up two and a half years ago, he has put 74,000 miles on it without ever leaving the state.

In recent weeks, Mr. Schanken has opened a lot of doors, looking for storage rooms and other areas that the college could convert to classrooms. He has learned that walking around with a tape measure is a sure way to cause alarm among faculty and staff members, who often cringe at the thought of giving up space.

"A lot of it is convincing people to give up their sacred cows," Mr. Schanken says.

In total, the system has converted five spaces into classrooms, including parts of locker rooms on the Catonsville campus. Yet one move often begets another. After removing the lounge in one building, Mr. Schanken had to find a place for students to hang out in another. And so the bottom floor of a structure known as "the barn," which is now empty, will soon get computers, accent lights, and vending machines. Because the area is being used by a summer camp through mid-August, workers will have about a week to transform it.

Parking is another concern. At Catonsville, several beeping bulldozers scoot around a giant mound of dirt, where a new library will stand in late 2010. The 75,000-square-foot building will have seven classrooms, as well as study areas and a cafe. Until then, there is an immediate concern: The construction has taken away 100 parking spaces.

"If we see continual increases like this," Mr. Schanken says, "we're going to be out of room."

'Leaner and Meaner'

A sign on the Catonsville campus reads: "Good News! Our in-county tuition is remaining at \$90/credit hour for summer and fall 2009."

It's a reminder that the Community College of Baltimore County is inexpensive—charging just \$2,538 per year in tuition and fees, or about a third of what nearby four-year institutions cost. And unlike at most four-year universities, students can show up here at nearly the last minute and still enroll. "You can walk in the week before school starts,"

says Jacqueline T. Cymek, a financial-aid specialist who works with veterans on the Essex campus. "Students will ask me: Is it too late? And usually I say, It's never too late." About 100 veterans are enrolled at the campus this summer—double the usual number and an increase Ms. Cymek attributes primarily to better education benefits under the new GI Bill.

Angela Barrett, a 27-year-old who spent four years in the Air Force, enrolled at a four-year university north of Baltimore when she first got out of the military in 2007. But her biology lecture had 150 students—which overwhelmed her—and administrators, she says, weren't very helpful in sorting out her military benefits. So, Ms. Barrett switched to the nursing program at the Essex campus last fall and has worked closely with Ms. Cymek. "At some of the four-year colleges everything is fax, phone—you don't even get to talk to a person," says Ms. Cymek. "Here, if someone calls I say, Come in and set up an appointment and we'll go through what benefits you're eligible for. It's one-on-one assistance."

As the economy has soured, the college is also getting a greater share of traditional-age students. Almost all of the one dozen students who attended a new-student orientation on the Essex campus in June said they were enrolling because of the price. "I thought I'd go to a four-year college right away, but because of money issues it's just cheaper to get the classes you need here first," said Ashley Golden, a 17-year-old who just graduated from Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts.

Bianca Giorgilli, another 2009 high-school graduate, said that since she has a single parent, "going here is just easier financially on the whole family."

Virginia Zawodny, a student-aid coordinator for the Essex campus, says the number of appeals from students asking administrators to reconsider their applications for financial aid have more than doubled—from 276 requests in 2008 to 583 this year.

Most of the students are asking for reconsideration because either they or their parents have lost their jobs.

Aqmal Majeed's father worked for 18 years as a surgical assistant in a Baltimore County hospital until he lost his job in February. Then Mr. Majeed's mother quit her job at a day-care center after its management changed. Because the family's financial situation has changed so drastically, Ms. Zawodny couldn't use their 2008 tax return to calculate how

much they could afford to pay. Considering his family's current financial situation, Mr. Majeed will now qualify for a \$5,350 Pell Grant for this academic year, plus 15 hours of Work-Study a week. He plans to enroll in the college's two-year physician's assistant program, and his father is talking about doing the same.

No Sure Thing

With the national economy still in shambles, however, it isn't clear that students who leave the community college here with a certificate or an associate degree will make their way directly into the jobs they've trained for.

Brian R. Penn, who coordinates the heating and air-conditioning program, says lots of businesses are cutting jobs for beginning mechanics and technicians.

"Our business has gotten leaner and meaner," he says. "Some of our students are applying for jobs and doing interviews, but the success rate is not impressive."

Ronald Kevin Gardner just earned a two-year degree in network technology from the community college's Catonsville campus. "I knew IT was going to blow up in the coming years, and I wanted to be able to capitalize on it," says Mr. Gardner, who worked as a maintenance electrician for General Motors for 24 years before he took a buyout.

His plan, he says, was to "jump into IT with both feet once I got my degree," but he quickly found that entry-level positions pay only up to \$18 an hour—about half of what he was making at GM. Because his wife recently lost her job at a hospital, Mr. Gardner can't afford to take an IT position that pays so little. So while he waits for her to find another job, he'll continue doing contract work as an electrician.

"In IT, I'll make a lot more money over the long haul," he says, "but I'll have to take the short-term pay loss to start."

Jason C. Yoe is in a similar situation. He spent years working as an auto mechanic—a job he enjoyed and that paid well. But after he injured his back, his doctor told him he needed to find a job that he could do sitting down. He'll finish his associate degree in computer-aided design at the community college next semester and then hopes to transfer to the University of Maryland at Baltimore County. He has a paid internship with the Maryland State Highway Administration, using his computer skills to help with land surveys. He

loves the work, but it's temporary and doesn't come with health insurance. "They told me if it wasn't for the economy," says Mr. Yoe, "I'd have a permanent job by now."

DAN WALTERS: New deficit looms for state next year

The Daily Breeze

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Posted: 07/30/2009 08:45:46 PM PDT

Even the most cockeyed optimist in the state Capitol, if there is such a thing, would not contend that the much-revised California state budget that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Tuesday is the final fiscal word.

Even Schwarzenegger, who usually puts a positive spin on events, was subdued, reminding reporters "we are not out of the troubled waters yet" and pledging that "if our revenues drop further, (we will) make the necessary cuts in order to again live within our means."

Not that the revised 2009-10 general fund budget exactly "lives within our means."

The \$84.6 billion budget is balanced on paper with dozens of accounting gimmicks, such as charging the June 2010 state payroll - about a billion dollars - against the 2010-11 fiscal year, and billions of dollars in supposed spending reductions, revenue and fund shifts that are, to say the least, dicey.

There is, for instance, the \$1.2 billion cut in prison spending, about half of which assumes that the Legislature will go along with Schwarzenegger's plans to reduce the inmate population by 27,000 felons. It's so controversial, raising the specter of early releases or less supervision of parolees, that the Legislature deferred a decision until after its summer recess.

Or, to cite another example, there are billions of dollars in raids on local government and redevelopment agency funds that will be challenged in court. And there are deep cuts in health and welfare spending - including many that Schwarzenegger made unilaterally before signing the budget - that already are being contested.

There's a billion dollars in extra federal health care aid being counted on the revenue side that may not materialize. And there's another billion bucks from the supposed sale of the State Compensation Insurance Fund's book of business that may happen, but might not.

Those contingencies alone could punch holes in the budget approaching \$10 billion. But wait, as they say in television sales pitches, there's even more downside risk.

The revised budget assumes that general fund revenue will approach \$90 billion this year, thanks in part to some backdoor borrowing from taxpayers through accelerated tax payments and a boost in paycheck tax withholding. But the state's economy is continuing to decline and revenue has been dropping. No one would be surprised if that \$90 billion figure is \$5 billion too high.

Finally, even if all the spending cuts and gimmicks work exactly as planned, even if this year's revenue meets expectations, and even assuming the economy begins to recover in 2010, the

administration now projects a 2010-11 deficit of \$7 billion to \$8 billion. But given the track record on such projections, the likelihood that many of the current assumptions will prove wrong and a strong possibility of continued recession, a deficit in the \$20 billion range for Schwarzenegger's final budget would seem to be more realistic.

California is sailing in troubled waters.

Bond money creates a new El Camino College

The Daily Breeze

By Douglas Morino Staff Writer

Posted: 08/15/2009



Additional parking is just one of the Measure E additions that will welcome El Camino College students this fall. (Brad Graverson / Staff Photographer)

It has been more than six decades since a vacant plot of land on the eastern edge of Alondra Park was transformed into the South Bay's first public institute of higher learning.

Back then, old Army barracks left over from World War II were trucked in from Santa Ana Air Base and turned into makeshift classrooms.

Now, 62 years after the first class was held at El Camino College, a different transformation is under way.

This fall, students at the two-year school will be greeted with expanded WiFi access, modern science labs and rows of new computers gracing freshly painted classrooms.

The improvements are part of a 15-year modernization effort stemming from the 2002 passage of Measure E. At the time of its approval, it was the largest single-campus community college bond issue in state history, allocating \$394 million for campus improvements.

New additions have allowed the school to adapt to an influx of students, said community relations director Ann Garten.

"Many people are returning to school to acquire new job skills," Garten said. "Now, we'll have the modern facilities to accommodate them."

Next semester college officials expect enrollment to cap at 27,500 students - a 10 percent increase.

Early last year, when a sleek new \$29 million humanities building was completed, students and teachers got a glimpse of the measure's impact.

Boasting expanded "smart" classrooms with WiFi access and computer labs, the new structure became the first instructional building to be built on the campus in 40 years. Even minor improvements will be noticed. Hallway floors are covered in a thick coat of vinyl, reducing noise when classes are in session.

And parking problems, long a hallmark of crowded suburban campuses, may soon be a faint memory. A five-level, thousand-space parking structure opened on campus in June near Redondo Beach Boulevard and Alondra Park.

"The No. 1 student complaint on any college campus is parking," Garten said. "So we were excited to get it opened."

The \$25.1 million project also included a dozen tennis courts and a new softball field.

And in October, a new wing of the Schauerman Library will be completed. The library project - which is still in the midst of construction - includes a \$13 million Learning Resources Center and a local history and archive room.

A new bookstore and conference center, currently a maze of rebar and concrete, is scheduled to open in fall 2010.

Other buildings planned for renovation include the communications and business buildings, where a \$63.4 million renovation is planned.

"It's going to be a cornerstone of the campus," Garten said.

Despite all the new additions, open spaces will still be expanded. New buildings will be complemented with sprawling lawns and additional landscaping.

"We worked to make sure we had a good balance," Garten said. "We didn't want it to be just all brick and mortar."

Community Colleges and Job Training: The NY Times Asleep Again

Fox & Hounds Daily



By Michael Bernick

Special Counsel with Sedgwick, Detert, Moran and Arnold and Research Fellow with the Milken Institute

Thu, August 20th, 2009

The New York Times has done it again in an article last Saturday, August 15, on community colleges and job training. The article is worth noting for how clueless it is of the wide range of job training and economic development activities being undertaken by community colleges, as well as how it misses the key challenges for future community college programs.

The article, “College is Model for Retooling U.S. Workforce” by Steven Greenhouse, focuses on Sinclair Community College in downtown Dayton. Greenhouse breaks the news that Sinclair is pioneering a new model of community college involvement in job training, and especially in retraining laid-off workers. Sinclair staff work closely with local employers to design customized training. The college works with local elected officials to identify potential growth industries in technology, including aerospace research and development, and advanced materials and manufacturing—industries that Dayton is trying to attract to the region. The college reaches out to high school students who might not think of attending college, and to workers laid off from General Motors, Delphi and other auto-related industries.

Though by all accounts Sinclair has developed a fine job training program, reporter Greenhouse does not ask any difficult questions, such as placement and retention rates. For example, we are told that Sinclair is retraining thousands of laid-off workers, but we are not told how many placements are actually made in, say aerospace research, in which the jobs created usually are small.

More important, anyone who has dealt with community colleges knows that over the past decade the majority have developed close ties with local employers and tie training to jobs. As my colleague David Gruber notes, this sophistication in job training is especially true among California community colleges, who have developed keen understanding of the existing projected job markets in their regions, and customized training to meet the needs of existing and entering employers.

The list of customized training programs in California is long, and here are just a few examples: Skyline College for years has partnered with Genentech for customized training of biotech technicians; Laney College is partnering with Siemens and other employers on an environmental

controls technician training; Harbor College is partnering with the oil refineries on a refinery technician training, Los Angeles Trade Tech and Southern California Edison are doing a customized training of utility workers, Santa Monica Community College and Los Angeles County MTA have partnered on a diesel mechanic training. The Los Angeles Community College District alone has a range of customized training, and is continually looking for new opportunities.

Further, California community colleges are engaged in economic development strategies that go beyond job training, including entrepreneurship programs and a sophisticated career ladders program, run out of the Chancellor's office.

In California, as elsewhere, we are entering a retraining economy, in which retraining and lifelong learning will be the norm, not the exception. Most workers can expect to have a number of different occupations over their work lives. They can also expect to be in a number of different roles: as employee, as self-employed, as entrepreneur. The community colleges already are at the center of this retraining economy, and their role only will grow.

Will someone please wake up the New York Times.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: BRUCE A. BOYDEN

LOS ANGELES WAVE

'That is my ... hope, that we will regain our prominence in the academic world.'

By LEILONI DE GRUY, Staff Writer

Story Published: Aug 21, 2009 at 3:25 PM PDT

Story Updated: Aug 21, 2009 at 3:25 PM PDT

COMPTON — Newly appointed Compton Community College District Board of Trustee member Bruce A. Boyden has never left Compton, figuratively speaking. The born and raised self-proclaimed “son of Compton” took a part-time job as an aide at the age of 12 at the then Christian Foundation School in Compton and from there was inspired to become an educator. At 19, he was elected to chair the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee at Compton Community College, where he studied for two years before making his way to the likes of Pepperdine, Harvard and Stanford universities — just to name a few. But for Bruce, though he attended schools in various states, his heart remained in the Hub City. When he learned that Compton College lost its accreditation in 2004, he joined the writing committee of the Concerned Citizens of Compton and helped generate more than 18,000 letters that were sent to elected officials in hopes of keeping the college open. Earlier this year, when former trustee Willie O. Jones left his seat to become a city councilman, Boyden stepped to the plate and became one of nine applicants looking to fill the position. On July 30, he was notified that he appointed to the Board of Trustees. Though he was sworn in Tuesday, Boyden still has at least one fight left. Since Jones’ was not completed, Boyden’s term is temporary and he must for election Nov. 3. In an interview with The Wave, Boyden skips talks about campaigning and says his primary focus is on the job at hand — getting what is now El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center back on its feet and on its way to once again being called Compton Community College.

You are a self-proclaimed son of Compton. What are your ties to the community?

I do consider myself a son of Compton [because] I was born and raised here. I’m a graduate of Compton Unified School District. I attended the first two years of my college education at Compton Community College. I have served on numerous boards. ... I was ... a great supporter of the tax override in the late '80s which generated \$1.5 million for the building of the Abel B. Sykes Jr. Child Development Center on the Compton Community College campus. I also ... served on the Early Childhood Advisory Committee at Compton Community College for 10 years as its chairperson ... I was [also] engaged by the Concerned Citizens of Compton that is led by Marie Hollis, the president, and they were concerned about the loss of the college and its accreditation and they began a subcommittee called the Committee to Save Compton Community College and I was active as a resident of Compton and I actually chaired the writing committee. ... And in our efforts to save the college we did a writing campaign of which we generated over 18,000 letters with signatures of which we sent to the secretary of education, the president of the United States, to the governor and all of the legislators in the state of California on our premise about keeping the college doors open and what a vital part the college played in

our community in terms of the employability of our young people, in terms of transitioning from high school to making a bridge to a four-year institution.

What do you hope to add or bring to the board?

I believe I am where I am supposed to be for this time and season of my life. It is my position that we will work as a team to address the issues and concerns outlined in the [Financial Crisis Management Team] report and that we will continue to work with El Camino College to address the issues identified by the accrediting commission so that El Camino will be in the position to request that the Compton Center be considered for eligibility to apply for accreditation.

How has the campus changed under its partnership with El Camino College?

Peter Landsberger, who is the state appointed trustee, has seemed to embrace the community in terms of looking at the community as a partner and moving the college back to its independence. He has done that by engaging the board and the mere fact that they have appointed a new trustee — myself — so quickly and have scheduled an election Nov. 3 for the other vacant seats on the board says a lot. The new provost they have hired, Lawrence Cox, is impressive by all means that we want to measure an educator. He seems to have the heart for restoring the college to its great prominence that it once had. ... When Dr. Cox was engaged by El Camino to serve as the provost at the Compton Center, the enrollment had dwindled to 1,500 students and as of today we have nearly 7,000 students. Dr. Cox has done a fantastic job at restoring this community's faith in what it can produce in terms of an academic institution for the Compton Community College District.

Prior to its transition, what did Compton Community College have to offer?

All students are not college bound to get a four-year degree but certainly the community college offered us the opportunity to get a skill that would make us employable and viable citizens within our community. Some will go on to four-year institutions as I did. I went there my first two years and propelled myself to go on to a four-year institution and then got a graduate degree. But there are some that are there to get a skill and become employable in the community. Some never leave. ... I have had many academic experiences and have studied many places around the country but none better than that of Compton Community College and I think that's why it is so near and dear to my heart. ... Ultimately it's the foundation.

What do you envision the campus becoming?

I envision the campus becoming what it once was, which was one of the greatest community colleges in the state of California. There are currently 109 community colleges in the state of California and at its hallmark was Compton Community College. Compton Community College District was and still is its own district and only had one school system in it which was the Compton Center and to that extent it turned out scholars and people of high caliber esteem from this community that are notables. I couldn't imagine [the loss of accreditation] would happen. The former president of the United States of America, George H.W. Bush was a student at Compton Community College. It's an impressive institution and that was back in the 40s. Compton College was an accredited institution since 1927. ... We have had some very notable, impressive people to have come through its doors over the years. That is my ultimate hope, that we will regain our prominence in the academic world and be one of the most notable community colleges, not just in the state of California but in the United States of America. I know it sounds

very lofty in terms of our goal but we have to reach for the moon. We may only get to the stars but let's go for the moon.

Wieder named interim community college district chancellor

The Daily Breeze

By Dana Bartholomew Staff Writer

Posted: 08/20/2009 06:15:36 PM PDT

A former educator who led the makeover of Valley College has been named interim chancellor of the sprawling Los Angeles Community College District.

Tyree Wieder, who retired last summer after 14 years as president of the Valley Glen campus, was appointed Wednesday to succeed Chancellor Marshall "Mark" Drummond. He resigned under pressure last month.

"It's terrific to have Dr. Wieder back with us," Mona Field, president of the district's Board of Trustees, said in a statement. "She will provide strong leadership while we conduct a nationwide search for a permanent chancellor."

Wieder, whose post as interim chancellor is expected to extend through February, will oversee nine community colleges - including Los Angeles Harbor College in Wilmington - and a budget of more than \$500 million.

In doing so, she accepts the challenges of a \$40 million budget cut and two college campuses - Los Angeles Trade Tech and Los Angeles City College - struggling with accreditation.

"I'm very excited to be back," said Wieder, who lives in Chatsworth. "Community colleges are the workhorses of the state, and it's vital that we provide the job training opportunities during this troubled economy.

"I'm very pleased to come back to the district to work with the board, the college presidents and all the district stakeholders, to move the district strategic plan forward."

Wieder, 62, will receive \$19,584 a month and a monthly transportation allowance of \$1,530. She is not a candidate for the permanent chancellor position.

Adriana Barrera, the former president of Mission College who had served as acting chancellor for the district, will continue as deputy chancellor.

Wieder, who retired as president of Valley College in June 2008, left a different campus than the one she took over in 1994.

She championed the renovation of the 50-year-old college, which is receiving a new Allied Health building, library, gym and dozens of classroom upgrades.

She also helped increase graduation rates and teacher retention. Enrollment increased to 17,000 students.

Under her watch, the L.A. Valley College Foundation watched its coffers grow to a record \$2 million.

Wieder, who was raised in South Los Angeles, attended Compton Community College before earning degrees at California State University, Northridge, and a doctorate in higher education administration from UCLA.

She now serves as president of the Board of Library Commissioners for the Los Angeles Public Library.

Filling seat for 51st Assembly District is a lesson in special elections

LA Times

Five Democrats and one Republican are vying for the spot. These races are usually costly, low-turnout affairs in which multiple candidates split the vote, resulting in a second round of balloting.

By Jean Merl

August 9, 2009

Mark Ridley-Thomas' election to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors last fall already has spawned three special elections for legislative seats. And there will be a fourth if none of the six candidates on the Sept. 1 ballot for the 51st Assembly District can muster a majority.

The field consists of five Democrats -- two members of city councils, a water board member who formerly served on a local school board, a 20-year-old making his first bid for elected office and a perennial candidate.

The lone Republican is guaranteed a spot in the runoff -- should there be one -- but faces nearly impossible odds, given that almost two-thirds of registered voters in the district are Democrats.

Under California law, vacant legislative seats can be filled only by special elections -- usually costly, low-turnout affairs that often require a second round of balloting before someone can garner the majority vote needed to win. A runoff would be held Nov. 3.

The March 24 special primary to fill the 26th State Senate District seat left open by Ridley-Thomas is a case in point. It cost county taxpayers \$2.2 million, and fewer than 8% of voters turned out, according to the registrar-recorder's office.

With eight candidates in the open primary, the front-runner, then-Assemblyman Curren D. Price (D-Inglewood) wasn't able to win a majority, so he found himself in a lopsided May 19 runoff with a Republican and a member of the Peace and Freedom Party. Price got nearly 71% of the runoff vote, triggering yet another special election, this one to fill his Assembly seat.

"This is a really important election, so we're working hard to get people to vote," said Tina S. McKinnor, president of the Lawndale Democratic Club. "We need a representative that is going to pay attention to all the communities in this district, who can bring resources across the district."

The 51st Assembly District stretches east from Westchester and Lawndale to include Inglewood, Hawthorne and Gardena; unincorporated communities including Del Aire, Alondra Park and Lennox; and some parts of Los Angeles.

It's an ethnically diverse, largely working-class district that over the years has seen aerospace and well-paying blue-collar jobs depart and several hospitals close, giving nationwide concerns over

the economy and healthcare access a particularly local intensity.

Latinos make up 44% of the population, with blacks accounting for 31%, whites 14%, Asians and others 11%, according to 2000 U.S. Census data. One-third of residents did not finish high school, and the median household income, adjusted to 2008 dollars, is \$49,400.

Gardena City Councilman Steven Bradford -- who lost to Price by just 113 votes in the 2006 primary race for the Assembly seat -- is widely considered the front-runner. He has raised by far the most money -- \$192,000 by the end of the last reporting period. And he has the backing of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and several labor groups, including the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Bradford has picked up endorsements from the California Democratic Party and from a slew of local elected officials, including Assembly Speaker Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) and his former political opponent and the man he would replace, Sen. Price.

Bradford, who recently made waves with his proposal to fine youths wearing "saggy pants" in Gardena, was an aide to the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald and currently is a public affairs manager for Southern California Edison.

"I've been a coalition builder my whole career," said Bradford, who sees the main issues as providing better healthcare access, creating jobs and cleaning up polluted former industrial sites.

Most observers expect Bradford's strongest competition to come from Gloria D. Gray, a retired healthcare administrator and former president of the Inglewood Unified School District Board who currently serves as vice president of the West Basin Municipal Water District Board.

Gray has deep roots in the district and currently serves as a county healthcare commissioner and as Ridley-Thomas' appointee to the county's Clean Water and Beaches task force.

But she got a late start in fundraising and so far has reported receiving just \$25,700, \$20,000 of which is a loan from herself.

She offers herself as the most experienced candidate:

"I am prepared to tackle California budget priorities because of my experience at both the local and regional levels of government," said Gray, who advocates universal access to healthcare and continued funding for programs such as in-home support services, adult day care for the disabled and help for HIV/AIDS patients.

Two-term Lawndale City Councilman Robert Pullen-Miles, a district representative for state Sen. Jenny Oropeza (D-Long Beach), said he offers the right blend of insider knowledge and outsider independence.

"This is the time when you really need people with integrity, people who are not too deeply connected to the system yet have knowledge of the system," Pullen-Miles said.

A reserve probation officer, Pullen-Miles said he would make public safety a top priority, along

with reopening Martin Luther King Jr.-Harbor Hospital as a full-service facility, creating more "enterprise zones" to stimulate job development and encouraging training in "green" technology jobs.

Another Democrat is Thomas Jefferson Cares, who turns 21 next month and who dropped out of El Camino College to independently study public policy. He has been campaigning energetically, calling for structural reforms in California government, including overhauling the voter initiative system.

Also on the ballot is Democrat Mervin Leon Evans of Los Angeles, an author and business consultant who has run for many other offices, including the 26th Senate District earlier this year.

The sole Republican is David Coffin of Westchester, an education activist and former small business owner. He is especially interested in improving housing and water policies and said he is the alternative to the "same old, same old" that the Democrats are offering.

"I'm tired of nothing getting done," Coffin said.

Collin County Has the Lowest Tuition In State

School board members have voted to lower tuition

Aaron Smith - The 33 News

August 26, 2009

COLLIN COUNTY, TX - Collin College is the most affordable community college in the state of Texas, now that school board members have voted to lower tuition.

It couldn't come at a better time, as a record number of students are beginning college.

When times get tough, more people head to college. That's proving to be true at Collin College.

Some students decide on this school because of the affordability. Freshman Toni Martin says, "We were not going to have enough money for me to go to school this year; I got fired from my job."

Toni Martin, 20, decided to take classes here because she only pays \$37 per credit hour. Martin says, "The classes here, for about four of them, was reasonably cheap; about \$372 for four classes."

Starting next semester, she'll pay even less. Collin College board members have agreed to lower rates to \$34 per credit hour, the lowest in the state.

The change comes right on time, as a record number of students are enrolling.

In both Tarrant and Collin counties, enrollment numbers are up by 15 percent.

Community colleges numbers in general are up these days.

Tarrant County has the most students with 101,226, an increase of 15 percent.

Dallas County Community College has nearly 72,000 students, up 9.6 percent over last year at this time.

Collin College has more than 24,600 students, an increase of 15 percent.

With lower costs, students are more likely to take care of themselves.

Student Cary Lloyd says, "This semester, I paid for it myself because, I mean, I had enough money. I didn't want to put the stress on my mom; I just paid for it myself."

The cheaper rates will also give Toni Martin a chance to save for the next phase.

El Camino women's volleyball program still state of the art

The Daily Breeze

Warriors reload with sights set on a third consecutive California championship.

By Tony Ciniglio, Staff Writer

Posted: 08/26/2009

Kiley Tamblyn knows a little something about pressure.

The former South Torrance High libero played last season for the defending state champion El Camino College women's volleyball team, where expectations continue to soar each year.

Playing under the tutelage of state MVP Karina Woehrstein, all-state setter Sam Taylor and Amrita Tuladhar, Tamblyn learned the mentality needed to thrive with a bull's-eye on her back, the never-say-die attitude that has marked El Camino's run to consecutive state titles.

Now Tamblyn is a savvy sophomore who will guide an almost entirely new cast of players who begin El Camino's quest for a third straight state title on Friday at 6p.m. at Fullerton.

"There's a lot of pressure," Tamblyn said. "There's always pressure, walking into the gym and knowing that the other teams are judging you. A lot of people have a lot of expectations for us, and we're a brand-new team.

"But we're still strong. I expect us to contend again. We all want it bad, and we want to get to state again."

El Camino must look to a group of new players to uphold the mini-dynasty that has been building, what with Woehrstein at Cal State Northridge, Taylor at Humboldt State and Tuladhar at Cal State Los Angeles.

El Camino distinguished itself the last two seasons, fighting its way out of the loser's bracket at the state finals to win the state crown. It became the first team to win a state title out of the loser's bracket.

"That was pretty amazing for us," Coach Le Valley Pattison said. "No one had ever won the state title coming out of the loser's bracket, and that first year, I think we surprised a lot of people, including the team we beat.

"The second year, the kids knew we could do it. It was a long road, but it was rewarding. Very rewarding."

El Camino expects another stiff battle with Pierce, along with other state contenders such as San Diego Mesa, Long Beach, Golden West and Orange Coast College.

Tamblyn said she is looking forward to playing Pierce in the El Camino Tournament on Sept. 11 more than any other opponent.

"We beat them in one (match), but they beat us in a tournament, and we never had a chance to play them again," Tamblyn said. "That's why I want that (match)."

There appears to be no shortage of talent on El Camino's new-look team.

Tamblyn will slide in nicely for Woehrstein and be the leader for the Warriors, on and off the court.

Two other returners are vital also. Former El Segundo standout Jo'Vine Tulikihifo, a member of the 2007 state title team, is returning from her second knee surgery. Then there's Deja Dickerson, a 6-foot middle blocker from St. Monica who is stronger and more efficient as a hitter.

"I think last season we didn't want to let everybody down," Tamblyn said. "I think the returners from the first season had a lot more pressure and we wanted to win for them, in their honor."

El Camino boasts a dynamic freshman class that might be the byproduct of two straight state crowns.

Outside hitter Ashleigh Gideon of North Torrance, setter Donella DiDomenico of Bishop Montgomery, outside hitter Kayelani Tanuvasa of Narbonne and Ke'ui Remigio of Oahu give El Camino a potent attack.

"Last year we did it mostly with defense," Tamblyn said.

"Sometimes we had three small players on the floor at the same time. There were some points I'd have to go on the front row. This year, our hitters can pass a lot more consistently."

El Camino is bringing in several players with college experience, including former Bishop Montgomery outside hitter Sarah Prather (a left-handed transfer from Hawaii), former South Torrance outside hitter Hattie Waybright (a transfer from Cal State East Bay) and Yacine Meyer, a transfer from Western New Mexico.

Pattison said she also is looking to outside hitter Erika Kirby (South Torrance), middle blocker Amanda Rico (Downey), opposite hitter Katie Krynen (St. Joseph's High) and middle blocker Courtney Wilson (Kauai) to provide sophomore leadership.

"In community college volleyball there's a lot of turnover," Pattison said. "The girls know we're defending champions, but every team creates its own identity. I just hope they choose to follow in the path of success."

Also in the South Coast Conference ...

Volleyball is officially back at Harbor College. After a season of scrimmages, Harbor takes full flight under Coach Chrissie Zartman, a former Bishop Montgomery and UCLA star who will guide the team in its first full season. Freshman middle blockers Lauren Favavae and Gwen Bird have been the early leaders for Harbor. Zartman said she likely will run a 6-2 offense with sophomore Angela Morales and Arianna Holguin (Torrance) both contributing as setters. Freshman outside hitter Jennifer Jimenez also will be a viable contributor for Harbor, which plays its first official match Sept. 8 at West Los Angeles.

Report calls for overhaul of California community colleges' transfer process

LA Times

It finds the obstacles that students face in moving to a four-year school are endemic and that fixing the pipeline to baccalaureate degrees is vital to the state's economic future.

By Seema Mehta

August 27, 2009

Community college student Kristen Grand dreams of transferring to Cal State Long Beach so she can earn a bachelor's degree in social work and become an adoption caseworker. But the process of accumulating the right course work and filling all the requirements is overwhelming, the 26-year-old says.

"It's kind of stressful," Grand said after class at Long Beach City College one afternoon this week. "Finances, for one, and whether I'm going to get the right amount of counseling to figure out what I need to do."

Grand is not alone. More than 2.7 million Californians are students in the state's sprawling network of community colleges. Some are enrolled in vocational classes or pursuing two-year degrees, while others seek a path into a four-year institution. But relatively few make the jump -- in the 2007-08 school year, 106,666 students successfully transferred to a University of California or California State University campus, or to private or out-of-state colleges.

Now, a new study finds that the obstacles California community college students face in transferring are endemic and require an overhaul of the transfer process.

Fixing the pipeline to baccalaureate degrees is vital to the state's economic future, according to the study by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy at Cal State Sacramento. The report, which is scheduled to be released today, notes that by 2025, there will be 1 million more jobs for college graduates in California than there are degree-holders.

"The issue is not new, but the problem is taking on increasingly large dimensions," said Nancy Shulock, the institute's executive director. "It's a pretty straight line -- you can connect the dots between the number of educated people we have and the economic future of the state."

The problem, she said, is exacerbated by the fact that community colleges often serve students who are unprepared, including those who are the first in a family to attend college, and lack enough counselors to meet their needs.

The report also found that the state's higher education system, which includes 110 community colleges, suffers from a hodgepodge of transfer policies that result in students taking too many courses or the wrong courses -- a frustrating waste of time and money that leads some to drop

out.

"Yes, I've been there," said Amanda Sosa, 24, who is in her second year at Long Beach City College and spent four years at another community college. By the time she is eligible to transfer next year, the Hacienda Heights resident said she will have completed 78 transferable credits -- 23% more than required -- because of confusion about the process.

Transfer requirements vary from campus to campus, according to the study.

For example, if a Bay Area student enters community college and hopes to seek a bachelor's degree in psychology, the six nearest public four-year institutions, including San Jose State and UC Davis, each has a different set of course requirements for transfer.

"That is very frustrating and confusing to students," Shulock said. "They may not know what major they are going to choose, or what university they want to transfer into. They may not get into their first-choice university."

Another problem, the report says, is that transfer requirements are different from the requirements to get an associate's degree. So if students do not transfer, or if they transfer and do not complete their bachelor's degrees, they have nothing to show for their work.

There have been previous efforts to address the problem, including legislation, campus-based initiatives and task forces. But the study, which also examines policies in states that are more successful in transferring students, says comprehensive, statewide reform is essential.

The report's authors advocate creating associate degrees specifically for transfer students that would fulfill the basic requirements for all California colleges and universities, and guarantee transfer of all credits earned in certain courses.

Other recommendations include creating a standardized general-education checklist of courses that would allow transfer to all of the state's public four-year institutions, and creating a degree-audit system so students and counselors could easily check whether they are meeting the requirements.

Eloy Ortiz Oakley, president of Long Beach City College, said such efforts are vital.

"We tinker around the edges, we maybe increase transfers by 1% or 2% -- that's not going to get us where we need to be," Oakley said. "We've got to scale up our efforts a hundredfold."

A link to the study can be found at www.csus.edu/ihe.