

# Education in crisis in Hub City

The Bulletin

2010-12-22 / Front Page

Parent anger, accusations of cheating and student harassment casts doubt on stellar API scores

By Cheryl Scott

Bulletin Staff Writer

The state of education in Compton appears to be entering a crisis if recent events are any indication.

At the college level, Compton Community College has become a part of El Camino Community College and, although the Compton Community College District remains a legal entity, sources close to the board and community activists privately express doubts that the college will ever be accredited and returned to the district.

Officials at El Camino College District have repeatedly assured the community that the exacting process for accreditation has begun and that the process is determined solely by the Accrediting Committee for Community and Junior Colleges, or ACCJC. They admit the process will take time, but they are confident that the end result will be accreditation and return of the college to local control.

Nonetheless, unease about the outcome still exists, say a variety of sources who asked to remain anonymous.

The college's enrollment is up dramatically in the last two years, an encouraging sign for the school. But the much needed renovation of the facility is moving slowly at best, and the Learning Resource Center remains unusable despite \$50 million in funding from the state and \$5 million from a bond measure.

At the K-12 level, recent events have focused national attention on the Compton Unified School District.

The parents of McKinley Elementary School have used the recently passed parent trigger law to formally demand that the school become a charter school. During the weeks that signatures were being collected, parents say that their students were harassed by teachers who were critical of their parents for signing the petition. They have also accused members of the Parent Teachers Association of disrupting their meetings.

Some parents reported that teachers had said that if the school were turned into a charter school, their families would be deported.

The district recently released academic performance index, or API, scores indicating that many schools in the district had improved their scores. Enterprise Middle School was cited as one of only two schools in the state with an API growth of 100 or more points. Its scores went from 593

in 2009 to 808 in 2010. Carver Elementary raised its API scores from 655 to 831. Washington Elementary went from 535 to 810.

Included in the results is a category for schools that have raised API scores by 50 points or more in 2010. Anderson Elementary (58), Carver Elementary (64), Davis Middle School (60) and Washington Elementary (50) were all on the list.

The California Teacher's Association said that the results were due to teacher-led reforms implemented in its Quality Education Investment Act, which is funded with \$3 billion over the next seven years. This is the third year the program has been implemented.

However, McKinley was not on the list of improved schools, and it is ranked in the bottom 10 percent of all elementary schools in the state and 22nd among the 24 schools in the CUSD.

McKinley parents say that their students' grades were high, but they noticed that the students' did not display the level of knowledge reported by the school.

Acting Superintendent Karen Frison said in a statement released after delivery of the petition that McKinley has improved its API score by 77 points over the past two years and that the school is "well on its way" to becoming an 800 API school.

Principal Fleming Robinson said that many parents said that they were harassed into signing the petition and were not given clear information on what the petition is.

Experts hired by the district itself stated they have "grave concern" for learning opportunities at CUSD. The report states that after two years of assessing the district in a number of areas: including governance, data systems and achievement monitoring, professional development, human resources, fiscal services, and academic alignment, the auditors "Achievement Equity LLC" say that they are concerned about the district's capacity to make gains for the students.

The school board had mixed reactions when it heard the report at their July 13th meeting, with some expressing disbelief in the report and others acknowledging the problems cited, saying that they are being addressed.

The report has been forwarded to the state board of education and department of education, which will use the information to determine their next course of action relative to the Compton Unified School District.

The current turmoil in the city of Compton over the performance of CUSD and the state of its schools will not disappear. McKinley parents say they plan to stay the course. And if they do, it's only a matter of time before parents at other schools start asking questions.

The school district says it intends to reach out to the community and seek its input about their level of satisfaction with their schools.

# **Hudley-Hayes to begin term as CCCD special trustee in Jan.**

The Bulletin

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New trustee promises fresh approach with emphasis on communication

By Cheryl Scott

Bulletin Staff Writer

Longtime educator and activist Genethia Hudley- Hayes has been appointed special trustee to the Compton Community College District, replacing Peter Landsberger, who is retiring after more than four years in the position.

The special trustee position was created in 2005, after the Accrediting Committee for Community and Junior Colleges revoked Compton College's accreditation.

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

She currently sits on the Los Angeles Board of Fire Commissioners and manages her own strategic planning and education consulting firm. She began her career in education as a teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

"I am enthusiastic about serving in this capacity and will work to help the Compton Center to again become an accredited college within the California Community Colleges," said Hudley-Hayes. "In the meantime, I will endeavor to maintain the public's confidence that the center delivers a quality education for all of its students."

She is upbeat about the college's current situation. "I am very confident that accreditation will happen," she told The Bulletin. "I would not have accepted this position if I didn't think that the college will be successful in its efforts."

She plans to communicate with the community regularly about the college's progress. "El Camino College has to present the college for accreditation," she said. "That's something that can't be changed."

Compton College has become part of El Camino Community College under an arrangement created by AB 318 in order to keep a college open in the city of Compton.

"But the communities served by the El Camino Compton Center deserve to be told step by step what the accreditation process is and what progress is being made toward that end," she said.

Before accepting the position, Hudley-Hayes met several times with California state education officials. "In these pre-meetings I did not see any reason not to be optimistic about the accreditation of the college," she said. "I intend to meet with the Compton City Council and the

councils of the other communities served by the college and give a presentation on exactly what is required and what the optimum timeline should be. I think it's important that people in the community know that the accreditation process is slow and thorough, but that in the end the college will be accredited and will be under local control once again."

Hudley-Hayes earned a bachelor's degree in English from Texas College; a master's degree in education from Pepperdine University; a master's degree in business administration with an emphasis on nonprofit management from the California State University, San Jose and The Center for Non-Profit Management; and a doctorate in political science with a specialization in public policy from American University.

"I think that my expertise in public policy will be helpful as the accreditation process continues and after accreditation is granted," she said. "There may be legislative work to be done in the future."

Meanwhile, she plans to make sure that the Compton Community College District is well represented as the accreditation moves forward. "I think it's important for the community to know that we are functioning as a unit and we are representing the communities served by the college."

Hudley-Hayes does not believe that the complex accreditation process as it has been outlined by El Camino Community College District is a result of the fact that the college lost its accreditation for cause in 2005.

"The process for college accreditation is very exacting for all colleges," she said. "The ACCJC will not issue an accreditation until it is certain that the college is functioning at an acceptable level and able to provide a quality education to its students. It will not accredit the college until it is absolutely sure that the operation will be sustainable far into the future."

Over the course of her career in education, Hudley Hayes says that she has been involved in five accreditations. "They are all the same," she said. "No matter what the community demographic is, no matter how new or how old the college is, the accreditation process takes several years. There's no changing that.

"But, that said, there is no reason the college should not be able to be accredited in five years if all of the requirements of ACCJC are met. The process is the process. The good news is if you get the steps right, you get accredited. No one can stop it."

Her first meeting is set for Jan. 11, when she will meet with Martin Ludlow, a consultant hired by Landsberger to help develop a strategic plan for the accreditation process. "He is the best at formulating strategic plans in situations like this," she said. "We need to add some depth to the plan. We need to make sure the plan in place is favorable to the college. We need to be comfortable with the pacing plan."

Going forward, she plans to communicate more with the community. “If we don’t properly communicate the progress and problems as they arise, rumors start in the community, and that is counter-productive to everyone.”

The college was taken over by Chancellor Marshall Drummond in 2004 when he was informed by the Compton College Board of Trustees that it would not be able to meet its payroll. The executive order issued by Drummond cited longtime fiscal mismanagement and weak leadership at the administrative level as reasons for stepping in to operate the college.

The ACCJC cited a total of 30 deficiencies when it imposed the “show cause” status on the college. From that time until the appointment of Thomas Henry as special trustee, teams of special trustees have been sent to oversee the day-to-day operations of the college and to find solutions to the cited deficiencies.

Before it can apply for accreditation, El Camino Compton Center must apply for eligibility through a series of detailed reports showing compliance with the rigid conditions required by the California Community Colleges District and the ACCJC.

Once eligibility has been established, the college can become an applicant for accreditation, responsible for reports and documentation showing that the college has made all changes required by the accreditation committee and meets its requirements. When accreditation is granted, the college will be turned over to the Compton Community College District.

# Colleges to Confront Deep Cutbacks

## The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 2, 2011

**In states where new governors pledge no new taxes, higher-education budgets will suffer**

*By Eric Kelderman*

The budget situation in Nevada is so dire that lawmakers there could cut more than twice the amount they spent on higher education last year and still not fill the state's projected \$1.2-billion shortfall.

Despite the gap, which equals nearly a third of the state's spending, the incoming governor, Brian E. Sandoval, a Republican, has pledged that he will not raise taxes to put the state's budget back into the black.

Mr. Sandoval is one of a dozen Republicans who were swept into governors' offices in November promising to hold the line on taxes and rein in state spending. Half of those states—Maine, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Wisconsin—face shortfalls so large that they nearly equal or even surpass the entire amount the state spends on higher education.

Those enormous budget gaps, and the likely battles over where to slice spending without tax increases, put public colleges in those states at the greatest risk of steep cuts in financial support during the legislative sessions that will begin this month in many states.

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- [Graph: Where Colleges Are Stymied by States' Red Ink](#)

At the same time, the newly elected Republican governors, assisted by a big new group of legislators from the same party, may be willing to apply their philosophy of small government to higher education by considering measures to loosen state regulations, which colleges often say impede their ability to operate efficiently and save money.

Of the 28 new governors elected in November, 18 are Republicans. Over all, the party will control 20 state governments, up from nine. Democrats will hold control of both the legislature and the governor's mansion in just 11 states.

Daniel Klaich, chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education, says the new governor, who earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Nevada at Reno, seems ready to give the system more independence. But the positive effects of less regulation, such as greater control of construction projects, may still be erased by steep reductions in state money, the chancellor says.

"I do think he wants to give the universities and colleges more control of their own destiny," Mr. Klaich says of the new governor. "But all of those positive things have to be measured in the context of ... the magnitude of the budget cut he might present."

The new crop of governors will take over at a time when many states continue to grapple with fiscal difficulties. While the nation's economy is slowly recovering, at least 35 states anticipate revenue shortfalls for the 2012 fiscal year (which begins for all but four states in July), according to a November report by the National Conference of State Legislatures. In those states, tax revenues are expected to fall \$82-billion short of spending.

In addition, 15 states face a total of nearly \$27-billion in midyear deficits, which they will have to close by the end of the 2011 fiscal year. Since last July, midyear cuts in eight states have cost colleges a total of nearly \$712-million, according to the state-legislature group. In all, states have had to close nearly \$400-billion in deficits since 2008.

The next fiscal year will also be difficult because the \$54-billion in federal stimulus funds meant to shore up education spending will be gone. In fact, many states used up those allocations in the 2010 budget cycle. That money largely saved higher education from major cuts in most states; nationally, spending on public colleges fell by less than 2 percent from the 2008 to 2010 fiscal years.

The forecast may be even bleaker in some states, like South Carolina. It cut higher-education appropriations by more than 15 percent between 2008 and 2010, even with the use of federal dollars, according to the Grapevine Project at Illinois State University, which tracks state money for higher education.

## **New Political Climate**

While a year of tough budgets is familiar to many college officials, the political climate in which they will operate has shifted significantly with the election of several state leaders who claim the mantle of the Tea Party and who take their cues from Gov. Chris Christie, the New Jersey Republican elected in 2009.

Governor Christie has gained national attention for refusing to raise taxes while slashing nearly \$11-billion from the state's budget, including \$173-million from higher education. That amounted to a reduction of about 15 percent for most four-year colleges, prompting a 4-percent tuition increase for in-state students at Rutgers University and warnings from other colleges that they will have to consider limiting course offerings and deferring maintenance on campus buildings.

But the political and practical difficulties of simply cutting spending are apparent in at least a half-dozen states where the size of the budget deficit eclipses all of higher-education spending and, in some cases, many other areas of the budget as well. Gaps that large put governors and lawmakers in the difficult position of having to choose among such priorities as health care for low-income residents, public safety, and campuses.

"If we eliminated every bit of state government except education and Medicaid, we couldn't eliminate the budget deficit," says State Sen. A. Shane Massey, Republican of South Carolina.

The state's new governor, Nikki R. Haley, a Republican backed by the Tea Party, has sworn off tax increases as a way to fill the state's \$877-million revenue shortfall, which nearly equals the amount it spent on higher education in 2010.

The election results make it clear that there's very little public appetite for any tax increase, Senator Massey said.

Even with little room in the state budget for spending increases, lawmakers are still interested in making sure that public colleges are accountable for the state money they do receive, and that they remain affordable for state residents, he says. "The real concern is that universities have had dramatic increases in tuition."

That sentiment led the state's Budget and Control Board last year to put a hold on new construction at any four-year campus where tuition had increased by 7 percent or more in 2010, and at any two-year campus where tuition had gone up by 6.3 percent or more. It's not clear if the new governor will continue to support that restriction, which so far has had little, if any, effect on campus construction projects, because the rule didn't apply to work already under way and made exceptions for deferred-maintenance or work to fix safety problems.

### **Economic Catalyst**

While several Republican governors and legislators have expressed concern about the rising costs of higher education, many also view colleges as a tool for economic development.

In Maine, State Sen. Richard W. Rosen, a Republican, says there is broad recognition that higher education was underfinanced during the recent fiscal downturn. His peers, he says, now see colleges as partners with the state in developing the economy.

But the new governor, Paul R. LePage, a Republican who was backed by some Tea Party supporters, has said he will not raise taxes to fill the state's projected \$436-million revenue shortfall. That gap dwarfs the \$264-million that Maine spent on higher education in the 2010 fiscal year, according to the Grapevine Project.

Even without budget increases on the table, there are lower-cost ways that the state and its colleges can work together to improve Maine's degree-attainment rate and the economic climate, Senator Rosen says. He is interested in the governor's proposal to add a "13th year" to high school, essentially a dual-enrollment program that would allow students to enroll in online or distance-education courses, largely at community colleges, and earn college credits while living at home.

In Nevada, says Mr. Klaich, chancellor of the higher-education system, the new governor wants to explore the economic-development possibilities of colleges. He has said, for example, that he wants to focus more higher-education programs on the economic needs of the state.

But public colleges "can't do it on nothing," Mr. Klaich says. "And we can't do it as budgets continue to be in a free fall."

### **Slippery Slope**



Similar tensions exist around the country between increased expectations for higher education and probable budget cuts. In many states, that conflict has drawn attention to the debate over how much freedom to give colleges to manage their own affairs.

Many college officials, while continuing to lobby for more financial support, are also focusing more on efforts to increase their autonomy. Receiving a smaller share of money from the state, they argue, entitles them to greater freedom from government oversight.

In South Carolina, public colleges are backing legislation to free them from state rules on construction, personnel, and purchasing. A similar proposal stalled in 2010, but the bill appears to have a better chance of passing this year, Senator Massey says.: "Hopefully we'll be able to give them some flexibility."

Eric D. Fingerhut, chancellor of the Ohio University system, says Governor-elect John R. Kasich, another Republican who has pledged not to raise taxes, appears to support colleges' economic-development role. He has, for instance, talked about the need to increase the amount of research that can be commercialized, Mr. Fingerhut says.

But the task of preserving higher-education appropriations in Ohio is daunting. The projected budget deficit for the coming year is \$3-billion, compared with the \$2.2-billion the state spent on higher education in 2010.

Mr. Fingerhut is hopeful that the new governor, who earned a bachelor's degree at Ohio State University, will support a bill to streamline the contracting process for campus construction projects. But the chancellor adds that he doesn't consider such autonomy as a trade for giving up state money.

Elsewhere, Mr. Klaich says he would like state leaders in Nevada to eliminate some regulatory constraints that cost the university system time and money. In particular, he argues, oversight of construction by the state's Public Works Board can delay the building process, and subjecting campus staff members to both the university system and the state's personnel system involves unnecessary bureaucracy.

But such changes in state oversight would not offset the effects of deep budget cuts that the university system has already endured, much less further reductions that may be looming, he says. Previous cuts have resulted in the elimination of nearly 700 positions, about 9 percent of the system's work force.

Budget cuts may also result in tuition increases that would put college out of reach for a large portion of the fast-growing number of low-income and minority students in the state, he adds.

Ultimately, he says, cutting the system's fiscal and regulatory ties to the state creates the possibility of severing the relationship between Nevada and its public colleges entirely.

"The state system is being asked to be more entrepreneurial and become more privatized," he says. "And the question is, How far is the state willing to go? That's the discussion I think we're going to have."

# The college transfer squeeze

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 12/26/2010 09:34:44 PM PST

Updated: 12/26/2010 09:50:01 PM PST



Gerson Monzon was a marginal student at Narbonne High School, but his get-serious push at El Camino College helped him win admission to UCLA even as competition intensified for students hoping to transfer to the top-choice campus. (Robert Casillas Staff Photographer)

Gerson Monzon wasn't exactly an overachiever in high school. Three years ago, he barely graduated from Narbonne High School in Harbor City with a 2.0 GPA.

But he buckled down as a student at El Camino College near Torrance, and this fall transferred into UCLA, where he majors in political science, and where the GPA of the average freshman is a sky-high 4.25.

The possibility of transferring into the school of one's dreams from a junior college has long been an option, but, thanks largely to the lackluster economy, awareness is growing. This means that while it's still easier to get into the top UC schools as a transfer student than as a freshman out of high school, the gap between those two methods is narrowing. In short, more students are pursuing the transfer option, which is creating more competition for the openings.

This story takes a close look at UCLA and the University of California, Berkeley in part because they are the state's most prestigious public universities, but also because they tend to provide more data on applicants and admissions than other schools.

Granted, students at El Camino and other community colleges who maintain a decent GPA while meeting other requirements are still guaranteed entry into certain UC schools. But there are no such guarantees for the big two.

Statewide, the proportion of freshman applicants admitted to those schools straight out of high school for the past few years has decreased slightly, and currently hovers just above 20 percent. But the statewide success rate among community college transfers to both UCLA and UC Berkeley has fallen precipitously in five years from roughly 40 percent to 30 percent, officials from those schools say.

This is primarily because more and more California students - prompted by skyrocketing tuitions and fiercer-than- ever competition at the four- year schools - are trying the transfer route. All the while, admissions have held fairly steady.

## **El Camino ranks high**

For students at El Camino College, there is good news.

The South Bay school has one of the best track records in the state for sending transfer students to UCLA. This fall, of the 14 community colleges where at least 100 students were admitted to UCLA, El Camino ranked No. 2, behind Diablo Valley College in the Bay Area.

But even at El Camino, the competition among transfer students is heating up.

In just one year, the success rate among El Camino transfers into UCLA dropped from 47 percent to this fall's 36 percent. The total number of admits sank in tandem, from 212 to 184. (El Camino's admissions rate for UC Berkeley, 28percent, is a point above the state average. This fall, that amounted to 87 students.)

The declining success rate of transfers into UCLA and UC Berkeley is yet another example of how the dour economy is putting the squeeze on all aspects of higher education in California.

It's a vicious cycle. Evaporating state funds have forced four-year colleges to hike tuition and cap admissions. Widespread layoffs and the overflow of applicants into the four-year schools have sent hordes of students to the community colleges, which, in turn, have been forced to cut course offerings for lack of state funds.

In five years, the number of transfer applicants at UCLA has shot up from 13,000 to 19,000. Meanwhile, the ranks of those who succeed has barely budged, from 5,350 to 5,500. (About 3,200 students actually enroll.) The transfer situation at UC Berkeley has been similar, officials say.

"I'd say we get on average 2,000 more applications per year," said Walter Robinson, the assistant vice chancellor and director for the office of undergraduates at UC Berkeley. "As the application pool increases, the competition is driven up."

The transfer option can be a huge money saver. UC tuition and fees have risen in two years from about \$8,500 annually to \$11,000. By comparison, tuition at a community college runs around \$650 a year.

Even though the transfer option is getting more competitive, in many ways it's still less mysterious than the out-of- high-school application process, said Rosa Pimentel, the associate director of admissions at UCLA.

"Out of high school, we don't care what your major is when you apply," she said. "It's about your SAT, extracurriculars, what you've done outside of academics. With

transfers, we are very, very focused on whether you're prepared for the major you have chosen. And your grades."

In the case of the California State University system, the ailing economy has had a particularly volatile effect on transfer admissions. This is in part because the CSU system is more closely tied to the state budget than the UC system, said Sue Oda-Omori, El Camino's transfer center coordinator.

For instance, in just three years, the minimum GPA necessary to transfer from El Camino to CSU Long Beach has shot up from 2.0 to 3.5 this fall, then back down to 2.25 for this spring semester, she said.

"CSU is crazy right now," she said. "They got hit with the budget."

The result: the number of students transferring from El Camino to Cal State Long Beach has plunged in three years by more than half, from 450 to 180.

Here, too, the news for El Camino students is good. The school this fall sent more transfer students to the CSU system - 871 - than any of the 112 community colleges in California, she said.

Hard work brings success

As for Monzon, he learned the hard way that the CSU system was getting tougher to get into. After achieving a 3.8 GPA at El Camino, he applied to a handful of CSU and UC schools. The first response came from San Diego State.

"They denied me," he said. "I was worried, because that was my backup."

Monzon actually started high school in Harbor City on a good note. He made decent grades and was a standout swimmer.

"But then I started hanging with the wrong crowd," he said. "I stopped swimming. ... I was involved with bad stuff."

His grades slipped to the point where he barely graduated. Adding to the stress, Monzon's father lost his truck driving job to an injury. To help make ends meet, Monzon started working at In-N-Out Burger and at a public pool as a lifeguard.

One day, at a family gathering, he and an older cousin had a discussion about life.

"He talked about how much he regrets not going to college," Monzon recalled. "He has a kid, and can't give him the life he wanted to."

Not long after, while Monzon was on duty as a lifeguard, a co-worker said she was going to sign up for classes at El Camino and invited him to come along. The next thing he knew, Monzon had signed up for a few classes, at a cost of \$72 to \$104 each.

Two years later, Monzon was on the phone with a friend when he saw that an e-mail had arrived from UCLA.

"I didn't want to open the e-mail - I didn't want to see another rejection," he said.

The friend persuaded him to check. It was a thumbs up.

"I just started screaming," he said.

To other young high-schoolers, Monzon relays a message: "If you don't have good enough grades in high school, don't worry about it. I'm going to one of the top universities in the nation, and I had a 2.0."

Find out more

For more information on transferring from a community college to a four-year university, visit [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org).

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## **Letters to the Editor**

Posted: 12/29/2010 06:42:53 PM PST

Student worked college system

Congratulations to Gerson Monzon for gaming the college admissions system so skillfully ("The college transfer squeeze," Monday).

With a high school GPA of 2.0, he is admitted to a totally unselective college. This later entitles him to apply to UCLA without taking the SAT, but probably with a great story about how difficult his life has been (no documentation required). His closing statement is one that should be emblazoned at the entrance to every high school in California: "If you don't have good enough grades in high school, don't worry about it. I'm going to one of the top universities in the nation, and I had a 2.0." Truly an inspiration, and a major contribution to closing the achievement gap.

- Steve Madigan  
Culver City

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## **Letters to the Editor**

Posted: 01/03/2011 06:56:09 PM PST

2-year colleges offer 2nd chance

After reading Steve Madigan's comment ("Student worked college system," Letters to the Editor, Thursday), I feel the need to comment on "The college transfer squeeze" (Dec. 27). While I was not happy with Gerson Monzon's somewhat cavalier statement saying not to worry about high school grades, I am hoping what he meant was that high school is not the end of academic life and a promising future.

I also would like to point out that El Camino College has many very fine professors and instructors offering a wide variety of subjects. Just like in high school, students who wish to transfer to a University of California campus must follow a rigorous course outline acceptable to the UC schools. (There is a transfer office on campus that helps with this.) Many times students who did not do well in high school must spend the time getting to the educational level that allows them to take these courses.

Students who complete the equivalent university-approved classes at a community college do not need to take the SAT. The SAT helps determine if a student is ready for college work. Two years of doing college work in university-approved programs certainly proves that readiness.

I add my congratulations to Monzon and to all of those students entering as freshmen or as transfers to the very competitive University of California.

- Diane Oley, Torrance



*Brendan Hoffman, Getty Images*

Rep. Virginia Foxx, a Republican from North Carolina, says if higher education "can't prove the worth of a program, then it needs to examine itself."

*By Kelly Field and Derek Quizon*

Washington

U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx, a conservative Republican from North Carolina who has questioned some of President Obama's education priorities, will lead the higher-education subcommittee in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 112th Congress, the congresswoman announced on Tuesday.

Representative Foxx, a former community-college president and professor, said in a statement that she was "excited to roll up my sleeves and work toward making our higher-education system even better while carefully stewarding taxpayer dollars."

In an interview with *The Chronicle*, Ms. Foxx said she did not seek out the post and does not yet have an agenda. But she implied that she would not shield higher-education programs from spending cuts, and she raised doubts about the need for community colleges to produce five million more graduates with degrees or certificates by 2020, as President Obama has urged.

Asked about Republicans' plans to slash discretionary spending to 2008 levels, Ms. Foxx said higher education "should never be afraid of accountability."



"If it can't prove the worth of a program, then it needs to examine itself," she said. "Wherever taxpayer dollars are being spent, there has to be accountability."

When questioned about whether she supported the president's ambitious graduation goal for community colleges, she said she was "curious to find out what the basis is for the claim that we have to graduate five million more people."

"I don't think the measure of success of a community college is always graduation," she said. "Many times, all people need to learn is a skill and perhaps get certification in an area."

Ms. Foxx has criticized [legislation that ended](#) the bank-based program for supplying federal student loans in favor of 100-percent direct lending, in which students obtain their loans from the Department of Education. She said on Tuesday that the bill "eliminated choice, competition, and innovations from student lending," and promised hearings aimed at making "improvements to a very flawed law."

She may also take the lead in Republican efforts to block or overturn recent Education Department rules that could hurt for-profit colleges, though that job could fall to the education committee chairman, John Kline of Minnesota. The most controversial of the rules is the gainful-employment rule, which would cut off federal student aid to programs whose graduates carry high debt relative to income and have low loan-repayment rates.

In the past, Ms. Foxx has been a friend of for-profit colleges. The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, which represents for-profit colleges, donated \$3,000 to her 2008 re-election campaign through its political-action committee, and employees of Keiser University gave \$2,300. Harris N. Miller, the president of the private-sector association, welcomed Ms. Foxx's appointment, saying she has "shown a lot of interest in our sector."

She has also looked out for her state's large military population, supporting increases in tuition benefits for veterans.

### **Reputation for Being Outspoken**

Molly Corbett Broad, the president of the American Council on Education, said she hoped Representative Foxx's interest in efficiency would translate into support for streamlining burdensome regulations.

Ms. Broad, a former president of the University of North Carolina, described the congresswoman as "accessible, open, and direct in expressing her views."

Among college lobbyists, Ms. Foxx is best known for her support of community colleges and her [opposition](#) to the creation of a [unit-record system](#) for tracking individual students' educational progress. She was also the only member of the House education committee to [vote against final legislation](#) to reauthorize the [Higher Education Act](#) in 2008. Ms. Foxx said on Tuesday that she couldn't remember why she voted against the bill.

Ms. Foxx also has a reputation for being outspoken and has sometimes caused a stir with controversial comments. She once said Americans had more to fear from a health-care overhaul than terrorism, and she has denied that Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming who was [killed in 1998](#), was the victim of a hate crime.

She is among the most conservative members of the House and boasts on her Web site that she was one of just 38 Republicans to score a 100-percent approval rating from the American Conservative Union.

Ms. Foxx grew up poor in the Appalachian Mountains and credits education for her own success. She was elected to Congress in 2004 after spending 10 years in the North Carolina Senate and several years as a professor and an administrator at several North Carolina colleges, including Appalachian State University, Caldwell Community College, and Mayland Community College, where she became president in 1987.

In Congress she joined the education committee in 2005 and left in 2008 to serve on the powerful rules committee. Her appointment to lead the higher-education panel marks her return to the committee.

## Company sues college district for at least \$1.2 million

BY JORGE BARRIENTOS, Californian staff writer  
[jbarrientos@bakersfield.com](mailto:jbarrientos@bakersfield.com) | Tuesday, Dec 28 2010 03:51 PM

Last Updated Tuesday, Dec 28 2010 03:51 PM

A company hired to install a \$3.6 million thermal energy system at Bakersfield College has filed a claim against the Kern Community College District for \$1.2 million that the company states the district refused to pay.

The KCCD board of trustees recently rejected the claim, which is routine. College and district officials refused to comment pending potential litigation.

According to the claim, the district "failed and refused to pay" Trane U.S. Inc. for material and work performed on the thermal energy storage system on the BC campus. The company started work in March 2009.

The thermal system is aimed at conserving energy on campus by using water chillers during off-peak hours to cool buildings. A storage tank, completed in the spring, is on the west side of campus.

Trane built what's called the "shift and save program" storage system. It's only the second such project in the state constructed by Trane.

Trane is asking for \$1.2 million, not counting attorney's fees and interest.

In other Kern Community College District news, the Kern County Grand Jury has asked for and received information on expenditures of KCCD trustees. A grand jury committee is studying trustee expenditures in local schools.

KCCD shared that trustees earn \$3,600 annually for serving, are reimbursed for expenses and get health and benefit plans. Retired board members also receive benefits if they reach 60 years of age, served for 12 years and were first elected in office before 1995.

According to documents, KCCD in 2009-10 spent \$120,000 on nine trustees (including student trustees). That includes \$26,700 in salaries, \$85,600 in health and welfare benefits, \$2,800 for conference expenditures and \$3,000 on mileage reimbursements.

Also, KCCD has accepted several grants and gifts for scholarships and student programs. Among them are:

\* \$160,000 from enXco Corporation to establish a "sustainability scholarship" among KCCD, Clean Energy Center and enXco. In the next four years, enXco will give about \$100,000 for six scholarships for the Utility Scale Wind Program. The rest will be for paid internships for enXco trainees.

\* \$392,000 from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for the KCCCD Clean Energy Industry Driven Regional Collaborative, which trains workers in the clean energy fields.

\* \$100,000 from the California Department of Education to create a career technical education program of Study in Health Information Technology. Job demand in the area will increase 20 percent in the next eight years, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

\* \$50,000 from Pacific Gas & Electric to sponsor the Clean Energy Center.

# Odd Facebook Post Leads to Student's Ouster, Suit

U.S. NEWS – The Wall Street Journal  
JANUARY 5, 2011

By **KEVIN HELLIKER**

A Kansas college is facing a legal challenge over its dismissal of a nursing student who posted online a photograph of a human placenta studied in class.

The student, 22-year-old Doyle Byrnes, was dismissed in November during her final year at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kan., for putting on her Facebook page a photograph of herself with the placenta.

In a lawsuit filed Dec. 23 in U.S. district court in Kansas City, Kan., Ms. Byrnes is seeking an injunction to reverse her ouster, on grounds that the photographs violated no school policy and were posted with the alleged approval of the class instructor.

In a statement issued Monday, an attorney for the college denied that the instructor approved or knew about any intention to post such photographs online.

The college also issued a statement defending its decision: "We will not tolerate such insensitivity on the part of our nursing students. We also must protect the reputations of our business partners in health care."

The photographs, according to the lawsuit, were taken during a Nov. 10 laboratory session devoted to studying the human placenta, the organ that feeds nutrients to unborn babies before being discharged at birth. The placenta studied in class that day came from an anonymous donor, and nothing about the photographs compromised that anonymity, the suit said.

The suit alleges that the class instructor, when asked if students could photograph themselves with the placenta, merely said, "Oh, you girls." When four students proceeded to take such photographs, the teacher issued no protest or warnings, the suit said.

Later that day, about three hours after Ms. Byrnes posted on her Facebook page a photograph of herself with the placenta, the teacher called her and asked her to remove the photograph, which she promptly did, according to the lawsuit.

The following day, Ms. Byrnes and the three other students were dismissed, according to the lawsuit. Ms. Byrnes's attorney, Cliff Cohen, said he has talked with the other three students but represents only Ms. Byrnes.

The lawsuit includes as an exhibit a letter that Ms. Byrnes wrote to the college apologizing for what she called a "lapse in judgment" but asking that she not be dismissed.

The school said the four students are allowed to reapply to continue their nursing studies in August 2011.

## Cornered in California



**January 5, 2011**

In what many view as a politically defining moment, University of California President Mark Yudof has placed himself in opposition to some of the system's most influential players – at least for now.

In a joint statement with Board of Regents Chair Russell Gould Tuesday, Yudof declared that he “must disagree” with a group of highly compensated executives who say they are entitled to increased retirement benefits. The statement could usher in a legal showdown between Yudof and 36 employees, who argued in a recent letter that the system was obligated to recalculate their retirement benefits.

The debate dates back years, to when the university first pressed for an exemption to federal tax rules that cap retirement benefits based on a percentage of the first \$245,000 in income, rather than an employee's entire salary. The I.R.S. granted that exemption in 2007, but Yudof and Gould said the exemption “did not obligate the university in any way to proceed with” lifting the cap.

“While those who signed the letter are without question highly valued employees, we must disagree with them on this particular issue,” the statement reads.

And disagree they do. Drawing from regents' minutes, the executives cite language that states benefits “will be restored.”

“The 1999 action [in which the executives assert the regents gave conditional approval to the pension changes] was not a 'proposal' ... it was approved regents policy,” the letter states.

Tuesday's statement from Yudof and Gould came amid outcry from faculty and lawmakers, some of whom have described the executives as tone deaf to the political and fiscal realities of the cash-strapped state. The system has a \$21.6 billion unfunded pension obligation, and officials expect that the increased benefits for wealthier executives would add another \$5.5 million a year to that figure, according to a 2008 valuation, which is the most recent figure that officials could provide Tuesday. In order to make the changes retroactive to 2007, another \$51 million would be required, the valuation found.

The public criticism hasn't compelled any of the letter's signatories to distance themselves from their stated positions. Christopher Edley Jr., dean of the law school at California's Berkeley

campus, said Tuesday that he is unwavering in his belief that he and others are owed this money, adding that the university has a stake in demonstrating that its promises will be kept.

“The craven scum who signed this letter, including me, believe this is about honoring a deal, not seeking a new one, and the hate mail isn’t as important as the need to defend policies that will keep UC’s 10 campuses strong,” Edley wrote in an e-mail to *Inside Higher Ed*.

Apart from his position as a high-profile dean, Edley is widely known as a key voice in system-level discussions about the future direction of the university, which he argues should dramatically expand online offerings.

While Edley and others say they've been denied something they were promised, they wouldn't be the first to be caught off-guard by regents' decisions lately. In the last three years, the board has approved a reduction in retiree healthcare contributions, raised the retirement age for future employees, instituted unpopular furloughs and approved unprecedented tuition hikes. While highly compensated employees who are fighting over pensions were hit by these measures too, many university employees who lost money and benefits in recent years never will earn salaries even close to levels where they would be impacted by a pension cap.

The collective pain endured by the state is no doubt fueling criticism of highly paid employees seeking better benefits. In such a climate, it would make political sense for Yudof to go beyond mere legalese and admonish the executives for their insensitivity, said Assemblyman Marty Block, a Democrat of San Diego.

“He needs to express the same kind of outrage about this,” said Block, chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

It may well shake out legally that some of the executives have legitimate contractual claims to higher benefits, Block added. But that doesn’t mean Yudof shouldn’t express his disapproval, he said.

“Politically, you don’t have to take a poll. You don’t have to have a weather vane to know which way the wind is blowing,” Block said. “Now, if legally his hands are tied, I respect the law requires him to do what he has to do.”

Yudof’s statement does not criticize the executives, other than to cite a disagreement in legal interpretations. It also leaves vague what might come next. Notably, there’s no discussion of whether he will recommend the regents take any action to formally reject the program, or merely stand by the position that the program was never implemented and, therefore, doesn’t exist.

When contacted Tuesday, a spokesman in Yudof's office did not elaborate much on the statement. “It’s not clear whether the issue requires further review by the regents,” said Steve Montiel, the spokesman.

## **Tough Spot**

The pension fight presents a classic higher education leadership dilemma for Yudof: side with the executives, and suffer the populist wrath of a weary public long skeptical of high compensation at the University of California; side with the critics, and risk alienating power brokers within the system, and even future recruits.

James C. Garland, former president of Miami University of Ohio, said he encountered numerous situations as president where he felt an unpopular choice was still best for the university.

“Things like firing a coach, or closing down an academic college, or paying a dean a high salary, those things often present a conflict between what is in the best interest of the institution and doing something that seems unseemly or antagonistic to the larger population,” said Garland, author of *Saving Alma Mater: A Rescue Plan for America's Public Universities* (University of Chicago Press).

If it's demonstrated that the regents in fact agreed to honor these bigger pensions – and that's a big "if" – then it may well make political sense to take the political heat and pay them, Garland said. Doing otherwise could greatly damage the credibility campuses need to recruit top people, he said.

“If [Yudof] wants to get off the hook politically, then obviously he could stand on some kind of principle that says, 'This is a tough time for California and for taxpayers, and these are among the highest paid people in the state and public life, and we're going to do what's in the interest of the little guy,'” Garland said. “That would be a very popular thing to say and it would get him off the hook with a lot of the opponents of UC policies. But there would be a terrible, terrible price to pay in terms of its impact on the campuses themselves.”

There is likely a price to pay no matter how the pension debate shakes out. There is a strong sense the executives are prepared to take their cases to court, and that may be necessary – and uncomfortable, said Terry W. Hartle, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education.

“It's never desirable. That's for sure,” he said. “There's no upside ... but, as I say, if it's a legal question there are legal processes for working through it.”

Helen Henry, who joined fellow Academic Senate members in a statement opposing the benefit increases, said she views the debate as part of a fundamental philosophical disagreement within the university. The signatories to the letter, many of whom are based in medicine or management, have a different view of the university than faculty from other disciplines, she said.

“I don't think there's any question but that there are these two different mindsets that are fighting for what the university should be. It's transparent in this letter,” said Henry, a professor emeritus of biochemistry at the Riverside campus. “They are running businesses. But there are those of us that don't feel this is what the university should be.”



“This is absolutely a manifestation of that clash between the people who see UC as their business ... and the people who see UC’s mission as teaching, and research and service to the state. That’s a dual personality that the university always has to live with.”

Henry was among seven Academic Senate members to serve on the President’s Task Force on Post-Employment Benefits, which looked at a range of painful choices for pensions. The Steering Committee of the task force recommended the pension benefits be increased for higher-paid employees, while the senators put forward a dissenting view.

While there may be room to debate whether the pension expansions were formally approved by the regents, there’s plenty of evidence to suggest the regents thought the increases were a sound idea before the economy tanked. Given widespread public concern about excessive compensation in higher education, the initial enthusiasm for these big packages is another issue altogether, said Patrick M. Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

“I think [Yudof is] right to resist this. The question is, should it have been done in the first place,” Callan said. “I would argue it’s pretty hard to make a case for that.”

— **Jack Stripling**

### **Comments on Cornered in California**

- It's not (entirely) the pension, stupid
- Posted by Professor on January 5, 2011 at 9:30am EST
- A contract is a contract, unless there are financial exigencies of great consequence. Absent bankruptcy by California, a problematic proposition on its own, I don't see how the UC Regents can in good faith abrogate these promises. While the California pension plan has not been well managed and appears to be over-generous by comparison, most organizations offer some sort of retirement deal to its employees.

The underlying problem has been the artificial inflation of administrative and athletic salaries over the last two decades. The regents have bought into the argument that quite mediocre chancellors and vice chancellors are worth what they are paying them and now they can't figure out a way out of the merry-go-round they created. There's no economic market here in the classical sense of that term. Salaries of public university administrators are not set by private sector markets; most of these guys (excepting perhaps the medical doctors, and then they would have quite different working conditions in the private sector) cannot earn those inflated salaries outside of academe.

- Profits
- Posted by Jon R. Cline on January 5, 2011 at 10:00am EST
- An oft touted criticism of the for-profit sector of education is that a business, by its defined purpose, must seek to maximize profits at the expense of those paying the bills. While it is true that this could happen, there is nothing in the rules of humanity that says it must. However, now we have 36 signatories, and some 200 other affected employees in the UC system, clamoring to maximize their profits in the form of retirement pay. Not

that they have not been paid well (\$400K annually and more is a pretty hefty share of the profits), they now seek a big payday upon exiting. Not much different than those greedy, dastardly for-profit school owners who seek to sell their school (which for many is the only retirement program they have) and live off the residual.

Things that make one go hmmm.

- Get ready to be reeducated!
- Posted by MajorWebUser , Consultant on January 5, 2011 at 11:00am EST
- Interesting article and two post prior to this one. I believe there is a great deal of misunderstanding of how economies really work. More to the point, what drives them.

I don't agree with Mr. Cline's definition of "for-profit" as it clouds and the true driving mechanisms of a free trading (for-profit) economy. In my forty years of experience (and research of available records dating back to the dark ages), I've never encountered any business that genuinely tries to maximize its profits. Nor have I discovered situations where those paying the bills (presumably the buyer) haven't received something for their expenditure.

In the simplest terms, any economic activity only survives as long as the receiving party feels they have gotten their money's worth and the producer spends less than they take in. Governments (federal, state, and local) and not-for-profits have long been shielded from the harsh realities of economic nature. Subsidies and rules that have distorted the natural controls of our 'free economy' are finally coming to light because "those paying the bills" (taxpayers) have had enough.

While it won't be either easy or pretty, we are all about to be reeducated in the ways of the economic world. Major changes will be coming that will cast the arguments in this article as petty. We are all going to relearn the meaning of "value."

- California Dreaming
- Posted by Andrew Davis , Executive Director at Illinois Student Assistance Commission on January 5, 2011 at 11:45am EST
- If the stepped up pensions were reasonably believed by both parties to constitute an explicit part of a compensation package then to refuse to pay them demonstrates very poor form and is likely a cause of action against the employer.  
That being said, the present times require great leadership and leadership in this situation call for sacrifice starting at the TOP of these billion dollar institutions.  
Perhaps Mr Yudof ought simply make clear that previous obligations will be paid in full , while at the same time request from each of these tin eared platinum wrapped civil servants a letter of resignation.
- common sense
- Posted by Gary Davis at Board Solutions on January 5, 2011 at 12:30pm EST
- Common sense would dictate some sacrifice by the highly-paid execs. Just because they are owed the money doesn't mean they have to accept it. Their comfortable retirement is guaranteed. It's time for them to step up for the good of the system. Yudof is right where he ought to be.

- where's the proof?
- Posted by UC Prof on January 5, 2011 at 12:30pm EST
- Re: "a contract is a contract": the reporter for the SF Chronicle who broke the story was interviewed on a radio station the other day, and mentioned that no one has been able to produce a written transcript of the meeting in 1999 at which the Regents promised this change in the pension allocation system. If/when the evidence does surface, I think there is good reason for legal disagreement over whether this verbal promise during a Regents meeting (made during a major boom period in CA, before the tech bust of 2000) represents an iron-clad contractual obligation or a good-faith intention with some built-in contingencies. University lawyers dispute these kinds of contingent promises with their labor unions all the time. I seriously doubt that UC's ability to recruit able administrators will be "devastated" if the Gilded 36 (as some of us faculty have taken to calling them) lose this battle.

Man up, Yudof.

- Resolution
- Posted by Santa Rita 2 on January 5, 2011 at 1:45pm EST
- UT System devised something known as UTGRA to implement the IRS waiver - this program was for participants in the 403b plan. Matching contributions and employee contributions were tax sheltered as a result.

UC, could agree to provide this "retroactively" the participants would be required to come up with their contribution - along with compounded interest in line with the pension plans projections (7.5% ?) this would keep the pension plan "whole". From 1999 to current, the plans results most likely are lower than this rate.

The regents could (should) then decide to cancel the program going forward, just like other recent decisions they have made on benefits.

## So long, Eva

BY DAVID SUISSA

January 5, 2011



David Suissa with his family and Eva Brown

It's not easy to handle death. It's so naked and finite. No matter how much we talk about the spiritual journey to the next world, about legacies that never die, about a life well lived, there's really no consolation for the pain of missing someone — really, really missing someone.

I will miss Eva Brown, a Holocaust survivor who passed away last week at the age of 83 after a three-year fight with cancer.

What I will miss most is the sparkle in her eyes. She seemed to always have it — when she first told me about her cancer; when she'd listen to me complain about stuff in my own life; when someone would let her down; when things were really good or when things were really bad.

She even had it a couple of weeks ago, when I brought my kids to see her one last time to say good-bye. I had a premonition it would be the last time, because my friend Marci Spitzer had left me a message that “Eva would like to see you very soon.” When I got to Eva's house in West Hollywood that Sunday afternoon — where we'd once been neighbors and where she had lived for nearly 60 years — Eva told me the doctors had said her long battle was over. By now, her two surviving daughters and her granddaughter were there with her around the clock. She was taking painkillers. It was just a question of time.

But she still had the sparkle in her eyes, the sparkle that said, “I'm still here.”

She mentioned that for the past few days she had been having visions of her father and husband walking through her room. They were the two men closest to her. She lost 59 members of her family in the Holocaust, but her father, a prominent rabbi, miraculously survived. They had moved to America after the war, and she never lost her attachment to him. She spent many hours at our Shabbat table telling us stories of what it was like to grow up as the daughter of the chief rabbi of a little town in Hungary when there was plenty of love but no running water.

*Video footage with Eva Brown taken October 2007.:*

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrmNOTwKPx0&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrmNOTwKPx0&feature=player_embedded)

She had a 50-year love affair with her husband, Ernie, who passed away about 10 years ago. But they had different outlooks on life. Her husband could never get over the pain of the Holocaust and the bitterness in his heart. She once shared with me that on his deathbed, he confessed to her that he regretted having been bitter most of his life.

Eva, somehow, managed to avoid bitterness. At the age of 16, she was sent to 10 concentration camps in just one year. Her signature story, captured at the beginning of Thomas Fields-Meyer's book, "If You Save One Life," describes her encounter with an American soldier, who rescued her from a long death march. He asked her, in Yiddish, "Who did this to you?" and she didn't have it in her heart to point her finger at a German soldier. She believed in justice, but not revenge. She also believed, as her father taught her, that every life was worth saving — hence the title of the book.

This ability to be positive and look to the future was almost inexplicable, because she spent so much of her time talking about the pain of her past. For many years now, she has been part of the family at the Museum of Tolerance, where she has spoken regularly to various groups about her Holocaust experience. The last few years, as if she could sense the clock ticking, she increased her appearances at schools, churches and colleges. El Camino College in Torrance even set up the Eva Brown Peace and Tolerance Educational Center in her honor.

I attended many of her talks. The extraordinary thing about Eva's message is that even as she talked about death, murder and pain, she always ended up in the same place — with an intense love of life. She left Holocaust theory to the intellectuals. Her specialty was living.

It was as if her years in the pits of darkness had led this tiny woman to reveal herself as an evangelist for the celebration of life. She saw this as a very Jewish thing — savoring every breath of life that God gave her. She loved going out. When I would take her as my "date" to the Maimonides Academy trustees dinner, she'd put on a nice dress and perfume and would ask to go in the sports car, even if she had trouble getting in.

Her sparkle attracted a "circle of love" from Jewish women in the community, among them Sara Aftergood, Lesley Wolman, Marci Spitzer and Kathy Barnhard, who constantly brought her the soup she so loved and invited her for Shabbat and holiday meals. When Rabbi Shawn Fields-Meyer visited her a few days before she died, Eva didn't want soup — she wanted to hear the song, "Eshet Chayil." She soaked up pleasure until the very end.

One of those pleasures was taking pictures. Her house was full of them.

On that last Sunday when my kids and I went to say good-bye, after we all shared kisses and sweet words, she asked me in a weak voice: "Can we take a picture?"

We took a couple of great shots with the kids. If you look carefully, you can still see that little sparkle in her eyes.

*To see a memorial for Eva Brown, visit [evabrown.net](http://evabrown.net).*

# Jerry Brown's choices for key posts reflect his long career

Some held high positions when Jerry Brown was governor in the 1970s. Veterans of the Gray Davis and Arnold Schwarzenegger administrations, career state bureaucrats and high-level corporate executives are in the mix.



From left, lawyer James M. Humes worked for Atty. Gen. Jerry Brown; Mary Nichols will continue in her position as air board leader; and former state schools chief Louis "Bill" Honig will sit on the Board of Education. (Sacramento Bee / Reuters / Associated Press)

By Anthony York, Los Angeles Times

*January 6, 2011*

Reporting from Sacramento —

Gov. Jerry Brown reached back through his four decades in public office Wednesday to fill key staff and cabinet posts and replace seven Arnold Schwarzenegger appointees to the State Board of Education.

Some of those named held high-level positions in Sacramento when Brown was governor in the 1970s — upstarts without political experience then, seasoned government hands now. Veterans of the Gray Davis and Schwarzenegger administrations, career state bureaucrats and high-level corporate executives were all in the mix.

Brown also gave his wife a top job, without a salary.

All 21 appointments announced Wednesday went to Democrats.

James M. Humes, who was Brown's top aide as attorney general, will be one of the most powerful officials in the new administration, along with Nancy McFadden, a former PG&E executive.

The state's sitting air board chief, Mary Nichols, who pushed pioneering environmental policies during Brown's first stint as governor and later helped Schwarzenegger implement the state's anti-global-warming law, will stay on.

Former state schools chief Louis "Bill" Honig, who resigned from that office after being convicted of four felonies — later reduced to misdemeanors — will sit on the Board of Education.

Brown, known as a hands-on manager, has said he wants a less hierarchical structure than his predecessor's and opted Wednesday not to bestow on any aide the title of chief of staff. Schwarzenegger's chief of staff, Susan Kennedy, was the state's most powerful bureaucrat in the five

years she held the job.

The choices reflect Brown's continuing resistance to liberal orthodoxy. Serving alongside labor leaders will be corporate executives and veterans of the Schwarzenegger administration. The governor, who gets involved in intricate details of policy decisions, is known to seek opinion from people of diverse ideologies; the group announced Wednesday will provide that.

Humes, 51, will be Brown's executive secretary for administration, legal affairs and policy. Humes was Brown's top deputy in the attorney general's office and for the last four years has worked closely with Brown and his wife, Anne Gust Brown.

Gust Brown played a major part in her husband's gubernatorial campaign and will have an integral role in the new administration. Brown appointed her special counsel.

McFadden, a former advisor to Davis, will be the new governor's executive secretary for legislation, appointments and policy — Brown's top liaison with the Legislature. She and Humes are splitting a job traditionally held by a chief of staff.

With the governor expected to announce a restructuring and paring back of state agencies in the coming months, he tapped seasoned hands and numbers-crunchers to head some of the largest agencies.

Brown selected John Laird, a former chairman of the Assembly Budget Committee, to lead the Natural Resources Agency. The agency oversees the state's water, energy and parks departments, conservancies and other departments that manage the environment.

Marty Morgenstern, California's top labor negotiator under both Brown and former Gov. Gray Davis, was selected as labor secretary.

Laird and Morgenstern join Finance Director Ana Matosantos and Health and Human Services Secretary Diana Dooley as the only people named to Brown's cabinet thus far.

Brown also put his stamp on the Board of Education.

Honig was elected three times as superintendent of public instruction but was forced to quit in 1993, after his conviction in a conflict-of-interest case involving the channeling of state funds to his wife's employees. Before that, he earned a reputation as outspoken, sparring with Republican Govs. George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson over education funding and policy. His new position is unpaid.

Honig "has the knowledge and skill to be quite valuable," Brown said, "and it would be a shame to waste that."

While the governor sets up his administration, an audition is underway for a different kind of post, that of top dog — literally.

Sutter, the Pembroke Welsh corgi who has been photographed with Brown and his wife in recent days, has been living with the couple on a trial basis, according to the governor's office.

The dog belongs to Brown's sister, Kathleen, a former state treasurer and current Goldman Sachs executive who is moving to Chicago to avoid any apparent conflict between her business and her brother's new job.

Sutter apparently is not heading east with her.

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## College accreditors become learning police

By Matt Krupnick

Contra Costa Times

Posted: 01/10/2011 12:00:00 AM PST

The learning police are on patrol, and some college professors say they have been too quick to the draw recently.

Accrediting agencies, pressured by the federal government to ensure colleges are properly educating students, have cracked down on the schools to prove themselves. And that pressure will become more urgent next year, when new rules will force U.S. colleges and universities to demonstrate that students are learning.

The shift toward accountability has made the nation's six regional accreditors the front-line soldiers, a role some of them do not particularly embrace. In California, the Novato-based Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges -- an arm of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or WASC, the umbrella group for the region's three accreditors -- has taken heat from educators for what they see as heavy-handed enforcement the past few years.

"Accreditation wasn't meant to be a policing process," said Barbara Beno, president of ACCJC and the former president of what is now Berkeley City College. She predicted a "showdown" with federal regulators in the near future. "I think we're reaching a point where we need to figure out what accreditors do and what other agencies do."

The federal government and most states require colleges to be licensed by either a regional, national or vocational accreditor in order to be eligible for tax dollars. And universities rarely accept course credits from students transferring unaccredited schools.

As school sanctions have increased, so has the ire directed at the private, nonprofit agencies, which survive mainly on public money but operate in relative secrecy. Accreditors send teams of college administrators to examine schools every five to 10 years -- more often for those with problems -- and then decide whether colleges are meeting their obligations. The teams review everything from financial records to decision-making procedures.

The agencies are exempt from public-record laws -- although public schools must disclose accreditation reports and related documents -- and most accreditation decisions are made behind closed doors. Punishments run the gamut from demands for relatively simple reforms to a costly loss of accreditation, cutting off a school's ability to attract public funding.

Only one public college or university -- Compton College in 2006 -- has lost its accreditation in the past decade, and that was due to extreme financial problems caused, in part, by administrators' fraud and embezzlement. In most other cases, accreditors simply ask schools to improve administrative procedures, finances or academic programs.



"This process is about the student," said Ralph Wolff, president of the WASC commission that accredits four-year colleges and universities. "It's not about proving anything to WASC."

But some see the accreditation process as having more to do with the commissions' sense of importance than higher education.

California's community colleges have been punished far more often than four-year schools, and those colleges' employees in particular have grumbled about the time and paperwork required by accreditors. And professors across the country have complained that the growing emphasis on "learning outcomes" -- or what a student retains in college -- is leading to standardization in higher education, much as the No Child Left Behind law did with K-12 education.

"It's a trend that doesn't necessarily get colleges to the place they need to go," said Laurie Lema, a Diablo Valley College speech professor and president of the Pleasant Hill school's faculty senate.

In the past, the U.S. Department of Education routinely cited accreditors for failing to enforce student achievement. Now, the accreditors are doling out the sanctions.

DVC is one of scores of California community colleges to be sanctioned by ACCJC the past three years. The school was placed on "show cause" status -- the final step before losing accreditation -- in January 2009 because of persistent administrative problems and its failure to measure student achievement. The commission cited the college's improvement last year and granted it probation, a step back from the accreditation precipice that gave the school more time to fix remaining problems.

Also on probation are the four members of the Oakland-based Peralta Community College District -- Laney and Merritt colleges, the College of Alameda and Berkeley City College. The commission, which meets in Burlingame this week, sanctioned the campuses last year because of the district's numerous fiscal and leadership problems.

But it is the upcoming showdown on student learning that worries even those who support increased scrutiny. While it will be relatively easy to measure achievement in math and science, how will schools figure out whether students are learning in fields such as history and rhetoric?

"I don't know that accreditors can prove that," said Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, the ranking Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, which helped craft the new rules on learning outcomes. "It's not a precise science, nor do I ever think it will be. But, in this day and age, there are questions (about quality) that need to be asked."

Accreditors themselves admit it is difficult to figure out how to measure learning in some cases, but they say colleges have relied too heavily on anecdotal proof -- asking students whether they have learned. The time has come for schools to collect data rather than promise to improve, said Beno, the ACCJC president.

Just how to measure those numbers is up to each school, but accreditors say some colleges have done a better job of figuring it out than others.

"At some point, the commission had to say we're tired of hearing that you're getting started," Beno said. "The lack of colleges' follow-through is what led to the sanctions.

"Some of the colleges are doing great at this. I know it can be done."

Part of the looming challenge nationally will be finding a balance between the roles of accreditors, the federal government and the colleges, experts said.

"We all have accountability to the federal government for the tax dollars we receive," said Judith Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, an advocacy group representing schools and accreditors. "But let's be clear that academic judgments should rest with the colleges and universities."

"We've all got a lot of questions," she added. "Things have changed very rapidly."

Most questions revolve more around the execution rather than the idea of the reforms, said Jack Scott, chancellor of California's 112 community colleges.

"I think the (accountability) movement in general is a good idea," said Scott, a former community-college president. "But how rigorously that is enforced is the question."

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## ACCREDITATION

Six regional organizations license schools and colleges in the United States and its territories, as well as a handful overseas. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges accredits institutions in California, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Micronesia, Palau, the Northern Marianas Islands, other Pacific islands and East Asia. Three WASC commissions accredit, respectively, K-12 schools, community colleges and four-year schools. Some vocational and for-profit colleges also are accredited by the organization.

# Wikipedia Comes of Age

*Michael Morgenstern for The Chronicle Review*

*By Casper Grathwohl*

It seems like a lifetime ago when I would stop into a Barnes and Noble to look up a fact in one of the books in the reference section. Or call a film-buff friend to settle some disagreement about who starred in a movie. But what seems like a lifetime was actually only a short time ago.

The pre-Internet "phone a friend" world that marked those days faded with the rise of the Internet and, more specifically, with the spectacular success of Wikipedia, which marks its 10-year anniversary this month. In the decade since its launch, we have struggled as a culture to keep up with the changes resulting from the enormous paradigm shift Wikipedia has created. But 10 years of perspective is not without its advantages. I would argue that we are now in a position to catch our breath and break old molds to take advantage of Wikipedia's greater potential.

We all acknowledge that the Internet is evolving at a dizzying pace. From the point of view of information delivery, it is fascinating to watch the way in which layers of authority have begun to emerge. That development should come as no surprise—a natural progression in any new knowledge system is for it to divide into layers of information authority. Not all information is created equal. The bottom layers (the most ubiquitous, whose sources are the most ephemeral, and with the least amount of validation) lead to layers with greater dependability, all the way to the highest layers, made up mostly of academic resources maintained and validated by academic publishers that use multiple peer reviews, trained editors, and scholarly reviewers. When the system is effective, the layers serve to reinforce one another through clear pathways that allow queries to move from one layer to another with little resistance.

The rapid evolution of Wikipedia in relation to academic research demonstrates that phenomenon. Not long ago, publishers like myself would groan when someone talked about how Wikipedia was effectively replacing reference publishing, especially for students. But my perspective has changed. As Wikipedia has grown, it has become increasingly clear that it functions as a necessary layer in the Internet knowledge system, a layer that was not needed in the analog age. A study carried out by Alison Head and Michael Eisenberg, published in a March 2010 edition of the Web journal *First Monday*, surveyed university students about their research habits and, in particular, how they begin research projects. Most of the nearly 2,500 students who

responded said they consult Wikipedia, but when questioned more deeply, it became clear that they use it for, as one student put it, "pre-research." In other words, to gain context on a topic, to orient themselves, students start with Wikipedia.

That makes perfect sense. Through user-generated efforts, Wikipedia is comprehensive, current, and far and away the most trustworthy Web resource of its kind. It is not the bottom layer of authority, nor the top, but in fact the highest layer without formal vetting. In this unique role, it therefore serves as an ideal bridge between the validated and unvalidated Web.

Some are concerned that students and researchers are confused about the authority of Wikipedia, using it interchangeably with peer-reviewed scholarly material, but I would argue that just the opposite is happening. That such a high percentage of students in the study indicated they do not cite Wikipedia as a formal source, or admit to their professors they use it, confirms that they are very aware of the link it represents in the information-authority chain.

That last fact is critical. For a knowledge system to function effectively, its users must have an intuitive understanding of the layers it contains. Today, when starting a serious research project, students are faced with an exponentially larger store of information than previous generations, and they need new tools to cut through the noise. Intuitively they are using Wikipedia as one of those tools, creating a new layer of information-filtering to help orient them in the early stages of serious research. As a result, Wikipedia's role as a bridge to the next layer of academic resources is growing stronger.

How is that happening? Take the case of a project undertaken by the academic music community. In 2006 a large group of musicologists began discussing, on an academic listserv, their students' use of Wikipedia. One scholar issued a challenge: Wikipedia is where students are starting research, whether we like it or not, so we need to improve its music entries. That call to arms resonated, and music scholars worked hard to improve the quality of Wikipedia entries and make sure that bibliographies and citations pointed to the most reliable resources. As a result, Oxford University Press experienced a tenfold increase in Wikipedia-referred traffic on its music-research site Grove Music Online. Research that began on Wikipedia led to (the more advanced and peer-validated) Grove Music, for researchers who were going on to do in-depth scholarly work. The rise in Grove traffic alerted me to the music Wikipedia project, but I assume that other such projects that have passed me by yielded similar positive results.

My opinion of Wikipedia, like the tool itself, has radically evolved over time. Not only am I now supportive of Wikipedia, but I feel that it can play a vital role in formal educational settings—something that five years ago I never would have imagined saying. To go further, while I do

agree that teaching information literacy is important, I do not agree with those who argue that the core challenge is to educate students and researchers about *how* to use Wikipedia. As we have seen, students intuitively understand much of that already.

The key challenge for the scholarly community, in which I include academic publishers such as Oxford University Press, is to work actively with Wikipedia to strengthen its role in "pre-research." We need to build stronger links from its entries to more advanced resources that have been created and maintained by the academy.

It is not an easy task to overcome the prejudices against Wikipedia in academic circles, but accomplishing that will serve us all and solidify an important new layer of knowledge in the online-information ecosystem. Wikipedia's first decade was marked by its meteoric rise. Let's mark its second decade by its integration into the formal research process.

*Casper Grathwohl is vice president and publisher of digital and reference content for Oxford University Press.*

## Expert Predicts a Deluge of Tablet Computers on Campuses

January 7, 2011, 3:43 pm

By Josh Fischman

*Las Vegas*—In his keynote address at the [Higher Ed Tech Summit](#), Walt Mossberg, the influential technology columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*, told an audience of higher-education officials and company executives that their future held many tablet computers. And not just the iPad, but some of the 70 or so new tablet devices that have been announced this week at the Consumer Electronics Show here.

Speaking yesterday, Mr. Mossberg noted that CES this year should be renamed “TES” because there were so many of the things. (There was Motorola’s new Xoom, for instance, and Dell’s Streak 7, Lenovo’s IdeaPad Hybrid—a laptop with a detachable tablet—and devices from Samsung, Toshiba, Motion ...)

And tablets will matter in higher education, Mr. Mossberg said, because students will bring them to campus, and colleges and—in particular—publishers will need to meet their needs. “The actual users, like students and faculty, will barge in,” he said.

Books should cost less, and they should be digital, Mr. Mossberg said. He is a trustee of Brandeis University, and “I vote on cost-cutting at every meeting. So the idea of having to spend a fortune on books is just primitive.” Course materials, including books, are less expensive in digital form, and tablets make them easy to use. “The multi-touch tablet computer has a serious chance of challenging the mouse-based interface, which has been around since the 1960s and came to fruition in the 1970s,” Mr. Mossberg said.

The technology columnist pointed out that the other major trend that will affect colleges is cloud computing, or the use of Internet-based software. Now, it may seem this news is less than surprising, as software companies have been beating this drum loudly for years. Still, colleges have not been listening. The latest [Campus Computing Project](#) survey, completed in the fall of 2010, reported that only 15 percent of campuses have a strategic plan to address cloud computing. So perhaps the reminder from the Brandeis trustee was timely.

# State of Washington to Offer Online Materials as Texts

## The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 9, 2011

### Money-saving effort at 2-year colleges faces vexing problems

*By Martha Ann Overland*

Olympia, Wash.

It's a question that students, and a growing number of their professors, are asking: Why require students to buy expensive textbooks every year, when the Internet is awash in information, much of it free? After all, the words of Plato have not changed in the past 2,000 years, nor has basic algebra.

Washington State's financially strapped Legislature, which foots much of the textbook bill for community-college students on state financial aid, has wondered the same thing. With nearly half a million students taking classes at the state's 34 two-year colleges, why not assemble very inexpensive resources for the most popular classes and allow access to those materials online? And why not cap the cost of those course materials at \$30?

Calculating the savings, when students are paying up to \$1,000 for books each year, was an exercise in simple math, says Cable Green, director of e-learning and open education at the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges. "We believe we can change the cost of attending higher education in this country and in the world," he says. "If we are all teaching the same 81 courses, why not?"

So with a \$750,000 matching grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the board has started an ambitious program to develop low-cost, online instructional materials for its community and technical colleges. For the Open Course Library, as the materials are known, teams of community-college instructors, librarians, and Web designers from around the state are creating ready-to-use digital course modules for the 81 highest-enrolled courses. The first 43 courses, which are as varied as "General Biology" and "Introduction to Literature 1," will be tested in classrooms beginning this month.

The basic design requirements of the Open Course Library are simple enough. The material must be available online and accessible to anyone, says Mr. Green. Faculty designers, hired for their teaching experience and expertise in the subject, can use material from anywhere and anyone, as long as they abide by licensing agreements. Instructors can then use and revise the material as they see fit, dropping and adding components to customize the course for their own students. And now they have peer-vetted syllabi, lecture notes, and teaching materials, available with a few clicks of the mouse.

If the course designers feel that the best instructional materials are online versions of traditional textbooks, that's fine. Or they can use a smorgasbord of teaching modules and exercises

developed by other open-learning projects, such as those created by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon University. Interactive-learning Web sites and even instructional videos on YouTube are also perfectly acceptable resources.

## **Math Problems**

That \$30 cap is proving to be daunting.

During a recent meeting of mathematics professors and librarians who are designing the courseware for Washington's algebra, precalculus, and statistics courses, it was clear that no one was completely satisfied with what could be found online. "A lot of things that are open are old," said Melonie D. Rasmussen, who teaches at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom, in Lakewood, Wash. "Or they are open and strange. She remembers a 1980s math book posted online that refers to VCR's. It would take more time to explain what a VCR was than the math itself, she joked.

Many course designers thought they would find everything they needed in the open content offered by universities like Carnegie Mellon. Those treasure-troves, developed with grants from several foundations, offer free courses in addition to lecture notes, virtual laboratories, and online "cognitive tutors" that guide students through complex problem-solving exercises. One company, Flat World Knowledge, offers free online textbooks that professors can customize for their own classes. (Flat World makes its money by selling ancillary study guides.)

But instructors in this group were annoyed with the assumption that it's just a matter of plucking ripe fruit off the Internet tree. They said they had been surprised to discover how few open-source sites cater to students who struggle with basic math, which describes many at the community-college level.

Traditional textbook publishers, which now promote e-textbooks, aren't the solution, insisted David Lippman, who teaches math at Pierce College and is a self-confessed open-source purist. "I find the publishers' online offerings nothing more than the old ancillaries they've always offered bundled up in a proprietary system," he said.

For under \$30, access to e-textbooks wouldn't get you the entire book, and what you do buy is typically good for only one academic quarter. Printing out a hard copy costs extra. There's also no guarantee that publishers won't raise prices. Mr. Lippman acknowledged that computer-generated math problems and solutions that textbook publishers now offer are popular and helpful, but he noted that they are not free.

Even if course material is free, different licensing rules can make it cumbersome to lift and blend with other work into a seamless text, said Federico Marchetti, of Shoreline Community College. Cutting and pasting also produces a mishmash of styles and teaching approaches, creating confusion. With the amount of editing and rewriting necessary to incorporate various kinds of material into his "Introduction to Statistics" class, he said, "it is actually faster to just write something from scratch."

## **It's Greek to Some**



Online textbooks, even custom produced, aren't an option for Tom Kerns, who is designing the "Introduction to Philosophy" course for the Open Course Library. Philosophy students need to use primary sources, says Mr. Kerns, who has taught online courses for years at North Seattle Community College. And that is where he is stumped. If students could read Plato in ancient Greek and Schopenhauer in German, then it would not be an issue. But the five books he wants to assign are modern translations using current idioms, and they break the \$30 bank. The general public buys those books, so mainstream publishers aren't inclined to cut students special deals or offer e-book versions.

"They aren't going to change their pricing policy for me and say, 'Your students can have them for free,'" Mr. Kerns says. "I have not figured out how I am going to avoid having two different courses—one for people who can afford the books, and another for people who can't. I am flummoxed."

Finding enough material isn't Jennie K. Mayer's problem. Sitting in an office at Bellevue College, with stacks of chemistry books that reach to the ceiling, Ms. Mayer says she and her colleagues are not overly concerned about choosing a text for the "Introduction to Chemistry" course. "A lot of publishers have approached us and have offered e-books for less than \$30 a quarter," she says. "They pretty much teach the same thing."

Her concern is that chemistry students at this level need supplemental materials to explain basic science concepts. That means plodding through the dizzying array of information out there. A single instructor, particularly a harried adjunct, is unlikely to have the time to sort through the good and the bad, much less to test experiments that just might blow up the lab. So Ms. Mayer and her chemistry colleagues want to build a course with added material that is as much for the instructor as for the student.

On one day this past November, the team was writing the module on kinetic molecular theory. This is a particular challenge, Ms. Mayer said. Many of their students lack a fundamental understanding of how air pressure works. But she knows just what experiment will make it clear. Ms. Mayer typed "egg in a bottle" into Google. Up popped dozens of links to odd but strangely compelling YouTube videos of amateur and professional scientists' demonstrating how a change in atmospheric pressure can force a hard-boiled egg to squeeze through a narrow-necked glass bottle. That, she said, is something you can't show in a textbook.

Mr. Green, of the state community-college board, says the Open Course Library is very much a work in progress, and may always be. Indeed, its success depends upon the academic community to continually review, revise, and improve the courses, and then post them back online for others. (The idea of freely sharing information, he concedes, might just be the more challenging cultural shift.)

But "getting there" is not in question, says Mr. Green. He says he's been blunt with textbook publishers and has encouraged them to get on board if they can.

"You saw what happened with Craigslist and newspapers," he says, referring to the free classified advertising that has helped force some newspapers out of business and required others to reinvent themselves. "We are going to get there with or without you."

# **Textbooks? So Last Century. Rent a Netbook Instead.**

## **The Chronicle of Higher Education**

January 9, 2011

*By Martha Ann Overland*

Bellevue, Wash.

For many students, heading to class without a laptop is a bit like leaving the house without wearing pants. And whether it's registering for classes, meeting with professors, or doing homework, chances are those aspects of college now involve a computer and the Internet.

Yet according to a 2010 survey by the Census Bureau, while Internet use is creeping up, 30 percent of Americans are not online—not at home, not at work. And it's not always by choice.

Low-income students are not just on an uneven playing field, says Kristen Connely, manager of the bookstore at Bellevue College, the largest community college in Washington State. Without technology, they can't even get into the stadium.

In November, with help from a U.S. Department of Education grant, Bellevue bought 500 netbooks—inexpensive laptops used to download and read Internet material—to rent out for \$35 per quarter. Negotiations are still continuing with publishers, but the cost of the e-textbooks used on the devices can be half that of traditional books. Students will also be able to download low-cost digital course materials being developed by the state's Open Course Library project.

Of course, without a high-speed Internet connection, a computer is little more than a fancy word processor. But publicly available Internet connections have proliferated to such a degree, Bellevue officials decided, that access is no longer the issue it once was. "Every Starbucks, every Safeway, as well as independent establishments have it," says Ms. Connely, adding that most public libraries, too, are wireless. "It's becoming a free service." And when students are on the campus, they have use of the Bellevue network.

The rental program is part of Bellevue's effort to keep current with changes the Internet has wrought, Ms. Connely says. Half of the books the bookstore sells are sold through its Web site. Beginning in the spring quarter, textbooks will be moved to the warehouse, and the store will no longer keep them on the shelves.

But isn't her bookstore's plan simply accelerating its own demise? "If students can't afford what we are selling," says Ms. Connely, "then we aren't providing what we are here for."

# 'Sad Day For California'

## Inside Higher Ed

January 11, 2011

A draconian budget plan laid out Monday by California Gov. Jerry Brown would slash higher education along with other already beleaguered state agencies.

In an effort to tackle an estimated \$28 billion budget shortfall, the newly elected governor would strip \$1.4 billion from public higher education institutions. The reductions would include \$500 million each in cuts for the University of California and California State University. Additionally, \$400 million would be carved from the budgets of the California Community Colleges.

The reductions constitute an 18 percent cut in state support for California State; 16.4 percent for the University of California; and 6.5 percent for community colleges, officials from the systems reported. *[Updated from previous version].*

While embracing the need for collective sacrifice, University of California President Mark Yudof said the reductions to the system constituted a “sad day for California.” The proposed reductions, he noted, would mean that collective student contributions to the cost of education would for the first time exceed contributions by the state.

“The crossing of this threshold transcends mere symbolism and should be profoundly disturbing to all Californians,” Yudof said in a released statement.

The \$500 million reduction would mean that the state’s annual per-student contribution would fall to \$7,210, compared to the \$7,930 students now pay at the University of California on average. The student contribution has risen steadily amid the throes of the economic crisis, which has prompted a series of hikes in tuition, dubbed “fees” in California. Yudof said his “sense” was that the university would not implement another tuition increase to deal with the proposed budget reduction, but that he “cannot fully commit” to that course.

The tuition increases have sparked massive student protests, and faculty have questioned whether the cuts will worsen the quality of what is often regarded as the nation’s premier public university.

Charles B. Reed, chancellor of California State University, suggested Monday that the cuts would limit access.

“We will work with the administration and the legislature to minimize, as much as possible, impact to students. However, the reality is that we will not be able to admit as many students as we had been planning for this fall,” Reed said in a statement.

Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott was similarly foreboding, saying in a statement that the budget reductions would mean “up to 350,000 students will be turned away next year.”

A last-minute budget deal in October was designed to restore funding to public higher education in the state, but Brown's plan would reverse those gains.

In a statement issued Monday, California's Legislative Analyst's Office pointed out that the cuts actually restore higher education funding to its traditional place within the state's budget. Brown's proposal would provide about \$9.8 billion in general fund support for public colleges and universities in 2011-12, which is about 11.6 percent of the total general fund spending. That percentage is about the same as the average share higher education has received over the past decade, the LAO noted. Of course, that average includes several years of significant budget reductions.

In a joint statement Monday, the heads of the three impacted systems -- Yudof, Reed and Scott -- suggested cuts to the institutions were counterproductive to economic recovery.

"It is clear the governor wants to engage Californians in a full and open discussion about what size of government they are willing to support. As leaders of the state's three public higher education systems, we are eager to participate in that conversation," the statement reads. "Given the vast demographic shifts underway in California, now is not the time to shrink public higher education, but to grow it. The road to recovery from this recession and prosperity far beyond it runs straight through our many campuses. These universities are the economic engines of California."

— **Jack Stripling**

## Brown's radical change to community college funding

January 11, 2011 | [Louis Freedberg](#)



Harrison Keely/Flickr

Gov. Jerry Brown wants to change a long-criticized method of funding community colleges based on the number of students in attendance on a single day near the beginning of the semester.

It is only one of several proposals relating to community colleges in his budget, including calling for increasing fees from \$26 to \$36 a unit, and reducing the community college budget by some \$400 million.

But it may be the first time that a governor has taken aim at the basic funding mechanism for community colleges.

According to [state law](#), every college has a "Census Day" – typically the first Monday of the fourth week of a semester – during which instructors take attendance and submit those figures to the state. The state then provides funding based on the number of students in attendance on that day. After that, it matters not how many students drop out or don't complete the class for any number of reasons.

For years, [a variety of researchers and policy makers](#) have pointed out that this system does not provide a financial incentive to colleges to keep students from dropping out. As [a report \[PDF\]](#) from Cal State Sacramento's Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy noted, "current finance policy places

disproportionate emphasis on the front end of a student's college pathway: we are buying college enrollments but not college completion."

Gov. Brown says that has to change, as outlined on Page 154 of his [budget summary \[PDF\]](#):

Currently, community college attendance accounting allows colleges to receive credit apportionment funding for student attendance after only 20 percent of a course is completed. However, 16 percent of students on average do not finish credit courses they have enrolled in. This policy provides an incentive for colleges to take advantage of the system to maximize funding which also distorts the overall (full-time student) workload completed by the colleges. In effect, colleges are being funded for a higher level of students than actually attend courses.

Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the Campaign for College Opportunity, an advocacy organization, enthusiastically endorsed the proposed change. "This is very exciting," Siqueiros told California Watch. "We are very hopeful that community colleges will have a very clear charge to improve rates of success."

She said according to a study conducted by her organization, only three in 10 students get certificates, associate degrees or transfer to another colleges after six years of community college study, "and the numbers are worse for students of color."

If implemented, Brown's proposal could put significant additional pressures on colleges to figure out how to keep students in class. However, it provides few details on how it would be implemented, and whether its goal is to save the state money or to raise community college completion completion rates, or both.

Colleges that are already working hard to keep students from dropping out could reasonably argue that they need extra

resources to focus more attention on potential community college dropouts.

And Brown's budget is not offering them more resources. Rather, it is expecting them to do more with less. By community college projections, Brown's budget would require community colleges to serve some 350,000 of its current students without any funding from the state.

Nancy Shulock, director of the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy, has been a principal advocate for changing the "Census Day" approach to funding – but not as a budget-cutting device.

One risk is that colleges serving student populations who come unprepared for a college education may end up being disproportionately penalized for lower course-completion rates, compared to colleges in more affluent areas. "I am all for having incentives to help students to succeed," Shulock told California Watch. "But if you don't carefully design it, and just say 'we will cut funding based on course completion rates,' that is exactly what will happen."

Meanwhile, Jack Scott, chancellor of California Community Colleges, sounded an alarm about the proposed budget cuts and fee increases, focusing less on whether students complete their classes but on the tens thousands he said wouldn't even make it into class in the first place.

"These are difficult times for California and there's no way to avoid the pain of budget cuts. However, if our community colleges sustain reductions of this magnitude, we anticipate up to 350,000 students will be turned away next year."

## **Duncan: Arizona community college did what it could with suspect**

**Washington Post**

**Posted at 6:31 PM ET, 01/10/2011**

*By Valerie Strauss*

Education Secretary Arne Duncan said today that the community college that forced out the suspect in the Arizona shooting rampage because he was disruptive did what it could in handling the young man.

"If I was the chancellor of that community college, I think that would have been my response," Duncan said in an interview with *Washington Post* reporters and editors. " ... My question is, lots of folks have mental issues. How's he get a gun?"

[Jared Lee Loughner](#), 22, is now charged in the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and 19 others. Six people, including a federal judge, a Giffords aide and a 9-year-old girl, were killed, and 14, including Giffords, were wounded.

Last year, Loughner was asked to leave [Pima Community College](#) after campus police were called five times to deal with his disruptions in class and the library, the school said.

On Sept. 29, the college said, it discovered that Loughner had posted a YouTube video he had made on the campus. "In the video, he claims that the College is illegal according to the U.S. Constitution, and makes other claims," it said.

The school told Loughner that he couldn't return until he had received a mental health clearance and could prove that he was not a danger to himself and others.

During the *Post* interview, Duncan was asked about how the community college had handled Loughner, and he said:

"I don't know the details. Where violence becomes sort of part of the political dialogue, where you have lax gun laws, where you have folks that are mentally unstable, easy access to guns, I think that's a recipe for disaster."

"I don't know any more details than you do ...

"From what I read, they said to the family that 'he needs some help and we won't take him back until you get him some help.' I'm not quite sure what else that community college can do. ... If I was the chancellor of that community college, I think that would have been my response. ... My question is, lots of folks have mental issues. How's he get a gun?"

Earlier in the day, Duncan had released the following statement about the shootings:

"The tragedy in Tucson leaves me sick with grief and sadness. A dedicated Congresswoman, a respected federal Judge, and a curious nine-year-old girl interested in public service are among the victims not only of a deranged madman but also of a society that too often shirks responsibility for our collective safety. My heart goes out to the victims and their families."



## Documents: Suspected Ariz. gunman's behavior in college grew increasingly erratic, delusional

LA Times

MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

*January 13, 2011*

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — For four years, Jared Loughner was an unremarkable college student, commuting to classes near his home where he studied yoga and algebra, business management and poetry.

But last year, his classroom conduct began to change. In February, Loughner stunned a teacher by talking about blowing up babies, a bizarre outburst that marked the start of a rapid unraveling for the 22-year old, who is accused of slaying six people and wounding 13, including Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

After his first flare-up, campus police decided not to intervene.

"I suggested they keep an eye on him," an officer wrote.

Loughner's on-campus behavior grew increasingly erratic, menacing, even delusional. Fifty-one pages of police reports released Wednesday provided a chilling portrait of Loughner's last school year, which ended in September when he was judged mentally unhinged and suspended by Pima Community College.

As the records were released, President Barack Obama visited Giffords in the hospital. Later, during a nationally-televised memorial service, the president revealed the congresswoman had opened her eyes shortly after he left her bedside.

Obama touched on themes of unity, patriotism and heroism in his address to the crowded arena with about 14,000 people, and he spoke at length about 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, the youngest victim of the attack. Her funeral was set for 1 p.m. MST (3 p.m. EST) Thursday, the first of six funerals.

As Tucson and the nation remembered the victims, new details surfaced about the busy morning Loughner had in the hours before the shooting.

According to authorities, Loughner hustled to Walmart twice, was caught by police running a red light but was let go with a warning, and later grabbed a black bag from the trunk of a family car before fleeing into the desert on foot with his suspicious father giving chase. Eventually, he took a cab to the grocery store where he opened fire on Giffords and a line of people waiting to speak to her. Authorities said Thursday that Loughner was also carrying a knife but didn't use it.

Just three months earlier, he had been kicked out of school.

In a Sept. 23 campus police report, days before his suspension, an officer called to quiet another one of Loughner's outbursts described him as incomprehensible, his eyes jittery, his head awkwardly tilted.

"He very slowly began telling me in a low and mumbled voice that under the Constitution, which had been written on the wall for all to see, he had the right to his 'freedom of thought' and whatever he thought in his head he could also put on paper. ... His teacher 'must be required to accept it' as a passing grade," the officer wrote.

"It was clear he was unable to fully understand his actions."

The school reports provide the most detailed accounts so far of Loughner's troubles at the college, and he is depicted at times as "creepy," "very hostile" and "having difficulty understanding what he had done wrong in the classroom." School officials have not said if the reports were shared with any authorities beyond campus.

During his first outburst, in a poetry class, he made comments about abortion, wars and killing people, then asked: "Why don't we just strap bombs to babies?"

In an April report, librarians called police because Loughner, with ear buds, was making so much noise at a computer it was disturbing others. He promised it would not happen again.

But a month later, he became hostile with a Pilates instructor when he learned he was going to receive a B in the class. The teacher told police Loughner said the grade was unacceptable.

Outside of class, she spoke with Loughner and later told police she felt the discussion "might become physical." The professor was so concerned she wanted a campus police officer to watch over her class.

According to school officials, Loughner studied at the college from the summer of 2005 to September, when he was suspended after campus police discovered a YouTube video in which Loughner claimed the college was illegal under to the U.S. Constitution.

In all, he had five run-ins with police on two campuses.

In early June, the dean's office received a report that Loughner had disrupted a math class when he started arguing with the professor about a number. The possibility of a suspension was raised at the time, but no action was taken.

In a second memo on the math class, Loughner proclaimed he had a right to exercise his

freedom of speech. "I was not disruptive, I was only asking questions that related to math."

DeLisa Siddall, a counselor in the Educational Support Department, asked Loughner to explain the dispute. "My instructor said he called a number 6 and I said 'I call it 18.'"

According to the police report, Loughner said he paid \$200 for the class "so he should have a right to speak." He said he felt that he was being scammed, as he had been in other classes.

Loughner was warned that the behavior had to stop or disciplinary action would begin. Since Loughner chose to continue attending class but remain silent, she "had no grounds to keep him out of class."

On Nov. 30, the same day he bought the Glock, Loughner posted a YouTube video, seething about campus police and the college.

"If the police remove you from the educational facility for talking then removing you from the educational facility for talking is unconstitutional," he said on the video. "The situation is fraud because the police are unconstitutional. ... Every Pima Community College class is always a scam!"

School officials told Loughner and his parents that to return to classes he would need to undergo a mental health exam to show he was not a danger. He never returned.

Kelsey Hawkes said Thursday on CBS' "The Early Show" that when she dated Loughner six years ago when they were both in high school, he showed no violent tendencies.

"Back then he was completely different of a person. Very caring, very sweet, a gentle, kind, you know, a little bit quiet. But altogether a pretty great guy," she said.

As officers interview people who knew Loughner, they're hearing of two very different characters: the younger, a normal, happy kid, and the older deeply disturbed.

"At some point there was something in this kid that was redeeming and someone could say, 'That's my son, I love him,'" said sheriff's Capt. Chris Nanos.

## College's Policy on Troubled Students Is Under Scrutiny By A.G. SULZBERGER and TRIP GABRIEL

TUCSON — Many people had a glimpse of the deep delusions and festering anger of Jared L. Loughner, but none seemed in a better position to connect the dots than officials at Pima Community College.

After the release of detailed reports the college kept of Mr. Loughner's bizarre outbursts and violent Internet fantasies, the focus has turned to whether it did all it could to prevent his apparent descent into explosive violence last weekend.

In September, Pima had suspended Mr. Loughner and told him not to return without a psychologist's letter certifying that he posed no danger. But it took no steps to mandate that he have a psychiatric evaluation, which in Arizona is easier than in many states.

Laura J. Waterman, the clinical director of the Southern Arizona Mental Health Corporation in Tucson, criticized Pima officials for not initiating an involuntary evaluation.

"Where does it reach a level where you say this person shouldn't be a part of any community and we have a responsibility to do something about that?" she said. The clinic, which offers walk-in psychiatric crisis care regardless of a patient's ability to pay, is one of the agencies Pima students are referred to when they need mental health services, including students who have been suspended like Mr. Loughner.

No record of Mr. Loughner seeking or receiving mental health care has surfaced.

"It is part of our practice to provide students with information of where they can go," said Charlotte Fugett, an official at the college. "It's their responsibility to find a practitioner."

Pima, a low-cost community college with 68,400 nonresidential students, has no mental health center of its own, which at other colleges can make it easier to connect needy students to psychologists and psychiatrists.

Paul Schwalbach, a college spokesman, said Mr. Loughner's "behavior, while clearly disturbing, was not a crime, and we dealt with it in a way that protected our students and our employees."

Pima has introduced policies to deal with disturbed students — similar to ones that swept campuses across the country after several

deadly shootings, including the killing of 32 at Virginia Tech in 2007.

Last year Pima overhauled its procedure for campus disruptions, creating a team of senior officials to identify students who pose a threat to themselves or others. The team began meeting the same month that Mr. Loughner was suspended.

Paradoxically, suspending Mr. Loughner may have pushed him further over the edge by adding to his grievances and isolating him from adults who could monitor him, said experts on campus violence.

“We should never treat that as a panacea that increases our safety,” said Gene Deisinger, the director of threat management at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., a position the university created in 2009.

When Virginia Tech expels a threatening student — as it does about a dozen times a year — campus police or sometimes a psychologist now monitor the student’s progress.

Marisa Randazzo, who co-wrote a sweeping 2002 federal study of school violence in the wake of the Columbine shootings, said that most shooters experience a personal loss before their outbursts.

If a school expels a threatening student, “you are now adding to the person’s losses even if you’re within your legal rights to do so,” she said. “At the same time you’re losing your own ability to keep an eye on their behavior or have a positive effect.”

Mr. Loughner, 22, who has been accused of killing six and wounding 14, including Representative Gabrielle Giffords, at a Safeway store in Tucson on Saturday, did not return to his former campus or workplace for his shooting spree.

On the hillside West Campus where Mr. Loughner took many of his classes from 2005 to 2010, a group of students on break Wednesday expressed competing views of the college’s handling of him.

Moises Melgarejo, 18, wondered if the act of suspending Mr. Loughner did not leave him precariously unrooted. “He wasn’t going to school, he wasn’t working, he was just sitting at home thinking whatever he was thinking.”

But Tyler Badilla, 20, said he would not have been comfortable around such a student. “What if he had stayed here and it wasn’t Giffords” he attacked?, he said. “What if it was another school shooting?”

Pima's updated response to threatening students "is a daily balancing act," said Ms. Fugett, the president of one of Pima's half-dozen campuses spread around Tucson. "It deals with rights and freedoms of an individual versus the collective good of the whole."

The nationwide adoption of campus threat teams — which typically meet once a week on large campuses, often below the radar of students — has been rapid since investigations of the Virginia Tech massacre showed that many people and departments had clear signs of the instability of the shooter, Seung Hui Cho, but no one connected the information.

Virginia passed a law requiring public colleges and universities to establish multidiscipline threat-evaluation teams. So did Illinois after a former student at Northern Illinois University returned to a lecture hall and killed five students and himself in 2008.

Today more than half of the country's 4,500 colleges and universities "acknowledge the need and have formed some capacity" to formally assess student threats, said Steven Healy, a former Princeton University police chief, who leads training programs in threat assessment under a grant from the Justice Department. On Tuesday he was leading a workshop for 70 educators in Phoenix, which he began with a moment of silence for the Tucson shooting victims.

At Virginia Tech, a group predating the April 2007 killings, called the Care Team, discussed issues like financial aid and family crises with students.

Now the Threat Assessment Team — a national model, whose members include the dean of students; the director of counseling; a university lawyer; and Dr. Deisinger, a psychologist who also holds the title of deputy police chief — meets weekly, discussing 9 to 20 cases. These include students who have made threats to an estranged lover, sometimes online, or more mundane cases of a student who is withdrawn and despondent.

Sanctions can include suspension, but that is a last resort. A campus Web site about the threat team answers a hypothetical question, "Can't you just make people leave campus if they are a problem?" in this way: "When people remain part of the Virginia Tech community, on-campus resources are available to them, and campus administrators are in contact with them to provide support they might not have if they were removed from campus."

A finding of Dr. Randazzo's study of 37 incidents of school violence, "Threat Assessment in Schools," published by the United States Department of Education and the Secret Service, was that shooters often leave clues that a peer might ignore, but that a concerned adult would

notice.

In Arizona, patients can be sent involuntarily for a mental health exam after a concerned party — anyone from a teacher to a parent to a friend — applies for a court-ordered evaluation, which can lead to mandated treatment.

Stella Bay, the police chief for Pima college, said the it could not initiate an involuntary evaluation without evidence that a student poses “an imminent danger.”

“That would be the only way we can do that,” she said.

The assertion seemed to reflect a misunderstanding of the state’s laws regarding involuntary evaluations. Ms. Waterman, of the Southern Arizona Mental Health Corporation, said a commitment procedure only required some evidence of danger.

“It’s a broader standard,” she added. “And it costs nothing to make a phone call and talk about it and consult with a professional.”

Since the weekend shootings, the number of applications for such evaluations at Ms. Waterman’s clinic has increased, she said, presumably because of widespread awareness of the issue now.

In fact, Ms. Bay called in a case on Monday about a student at Pima who threatened to cause harm on campus, according to Ms. Waterman.

The police brought the student to a hospital for an evaluation.

A.G. Sulzberger reported from Tucson, and Trip Gabriel from New York.

## **Mt. SAC fire chief arrested for embezzling \$500,000**

Posted: 01/12/2011 10:44:31 AM PST

### **Blog**

Go behind the yellow tape in the [Crime Scene](#) blog

WALNUT - The fire chief of Mt. San Antonio College's Fire Academy was arrested last week for allegedly embezzling \$500,000 from the school, police said.

Jerry Dewayne Austin, 56, of Norco, was arrested on Jan. 5 and charged with felony grand theft for allegedly embezzling \$500,000, said Sgt. Mario Estrada of the Walnut/Diamond Bar Sheriff's' Station.

"Apparently this person worked at Mt. SAC College and opened an account in the school's name and embezzled some funds," he said. School officials are denying police reports that Austin, the school's fire technology director, embezzled funds from the school.

"He is facing charges forgery and identity theft related to an unauthorized bank account opened under the college's federal ID," said Clarence Brown, Mt. SAC's director of marketing and public affairs.

Austin was arraigned Monday on two counts of identity theft and two counts of forgery, school officials said.

An unidentified third party had tipped the school off to the unauthorized bank account sometime in the fall, Brown said.

Austin was placed on paid administrative leave in early September and internal investigations began, Brown said.

School officials are working on the case with the sheriff's department.

Austin began teaching at Mt. SAC's fire academy in 2003.

He previously worked at the Anaheim Fire Department for 29 years and is a retired Division Chief Fire Marshal, according to the school's website.

Austin began his college education as a fire technology student at Santa Ana Community College in 1972 and has earned several titles, including Arson Investigator, Captain, Safety Officer and Battalion Commander.

He is being held at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility in Los Angeles in lieu of \$3 million.

Austin is scheduled to appear for a bail reduction hearing at the Pomona Superior Court at 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 13, officials said.

Read more: [http://www.sgytribune.com/ci\\_17075447#ixzz1AsZiQV00](http://www.sgytribune.com/ci_17075447#ixzz1AsZiQV00)



# Facing New Cuts, California's Colleges Are Shrinking Their Enrollments

<http://chronicle.com/article/Facing-New-Cuts-Californias/125945/>

January 13, 2011

Gov. Jerry Brown of California released a budget proposal on Monday that would trim \$1.4-billion from the state's public colleges, making further enrollment drops likely.



*Hector Amezcua, Sacramento Bee, MCT, Newscom*

Gov. Jerry Brown of California released a budget proposal on Monday that would trim \$1.4-billion from the state's public colleges, making further enrollment drops likely.

*By Josh Keller*

San Francisco

The \$1.4-billion in budget cuts proposed this week for California's public colleges could prompt a new year of protests that decry higher tuition, stagnant employee salaries, and the growing inability of Californians to afford college.

But as a barrier to student access, rising tuition may ultimately pale in comparison with a more fundamental shift: The state's colleges have started to shrink.

California's public-college enrollment declined by 165,000 during the past academic year, even as the number of people trying to get into college grew. Community colleges accounted for most of the decline, the largest in a single year since 1993.

The combination of a growing college-age population and a reduced budget has turned what was once a model for college access into a much scarcer commodity. California State University at Long Beach, which has lost more students than most colleges, enrolled only 9 percent of applicants last fall, a lower rate than at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Virginia, and only slightly higher than at Dartmouth College.

The cuts that Gov. Jerry Brown, a newly elected Democrat, has proposed would ensure that the nation's largest set of public colleges—comprising three systems—would continue downsizing well into 2012.

The campuses in the Cal State system, which had planned to grow this fall, may reverse course and cut undergraduate enrollment for the second time in two years. The University of California, which has managed to hold its numbers fairly steady, will begin to consider major enrollment cuts for 2012 at a Board of Regents meeting this month.

"The physics of the situation cannot be denied—as the core budget shrinks, so must the university," Mark G. Yudof, president of the University of California, wrote in response to the governor's plan.

<b>Where California's Transfer Students Ended Up</b>							
Far fewer community-college students were able to transfer to California State University campuses last year because of budget cuts. As the capacity of public universities has stagnated, the number of Californians who transfer to private colleges has grown.							
	<b>2003-4</b>	<b>2004-5</b>	<b>2005-6</b>	<b>2006-7</b>	<b>2007-8</b>	<b>2008-9</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
California State U.	48,321	53,695	52,641	54,391	54,971	49,770	37,647
U. of California	12,539	13,114	13,510	13,871	13,909	14,059	14,702
Private nonprofit colleges	20,110	20,977	20,958	20,277	21,774	22,366	*
Private for-profit colleges	10,473	11,248	11,004	11,990	14,201	13,388	*

## Where California's Transfer Students Ended Up

\* Private-college data for 2009-10 are not yet available.

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Mr. Brown's budget is only a proposal, of course, and unhappy lawmakers from both parties will try to change it. But few college officials believe that the situation will improve in the coming months.

The community colleges, which face a cut of \$400-million, or 6.5 percent, were nonetheless asked by the governor to expand the number of students they serve. Jack Scott, chancellor of the community-college system, said in an interview that he would resist the idea.

"If indeed this \$400-million cut is enacted, I will make the argument that we should not be required to educate the same number of students," he said. "It's a quality issue."

It is impossible to predict just who would be shut out of a college education in California's next round of budget cuts. The state's three higher-education systems employ a complex calculus of ability, seniority, local priorities, and chance to determine which students get in and which ones don't.

But the effects of the most recent round of cuts, in 2008, offer a guide.

Transfer students in California, who try to leap from one sputtering system to another, have been shut out of four-year universities at a much greater rate than have incoming freshman applicants. Cal State enrolls more community-college transfer students than any other university system in the country. But in the 2009-10 academic year, fewer than 38,000 students were able to transfer from community colleges to Cal State, down from a high of 55,000 two years earlier.

Students with strong but not sparkling grades and test scores have found that public colleges that were shoo-ins for people like them just a few years ago have raised their academic standards.

Students who live in Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego, San Jose, and other cities with overcrowded colleges have been shut out in record numbers. Community colleges and Cal State campuses there simply cannot keep up with regional growth.

Only four or five years ago, says Michelle Ponce, a college counselor at Millikan High School, in Long Beach, students could feel comfortable going the traditional route: earning good grades and going to Cal State's Long Beach campus.

But the sheer number of applications that the college receives—69,000 last fall, for 6,250 slots—has forced her to encourage students to look at other options. Private colleges are often a good choice, even if they can be more expensive, she says. Colleges in other states tend to have more room.

"I'll tell students in my presentations that if you want to leave the state, good for you," Ms. Ponce says. "We have too many people in the state of California. We need someone to leave right now."

Many of the students are in denial, she adds. Their parents don't understand how the landscape has shifted. "I will break out the numbers, and they kind of look at me in complete confusion," she says. "They have no idea."

### **Long-Term Effects**

Reduced enrollment has far-reaching effects in part because recovering from it is difficult for colleges. Even after the recession has ebbed, smaller cohorts of students will still be working their way through the system, limiting the state's degree production for four years or more.

James C. Blackburn, Cal State's director of enrollment management, says some of the system's universities also have a difficult time raising enrollment once they have reduced it. Cuts in faculty, staff, and courses are difficult to reverse, and institutions can be hurt by the loss of the tuition income. After the previous round of budget cuts, he says, "it was amazing how hard it was to pump it back up again once the resources started to flow."

"It doesn't always communicate in California, but it's like driving a car on an icy road," he adds. "You don't want to overdo anything because if you swing left or swing right or try to stop too abruptly, the consequences are sometimes fatal."

Given those concerns, Cal State officials say they may not cut into enrollment quite as sharply as they have in the past. Instead, they will consider being more aggressive in other ways to reduce costs: layoffs, reduced pay or furloughs for employees, cuts in the chancellor's office, or, as a last resort, they say, more tuition increases.

But that attitude may change if Californians do not approve a \$9-billion extension of tax increases that is the foundation of Governor Brown's proposed budget. If the package is voted down or fails to get on the ballot because of opposition from Republican lawmakers—a real possibility—colleges could see budget cuts that make the crises of the past few years look mild.

Mr. Scott, the community-college chancellor, estimates that the failure of the ballot measure could mean that the state's community colleges would face double the amount of cuts proposed by the governor, \$800-million rather than \$400-million.

Mr. Brown, who has been in office only since January 3, warned at a news conference introducing the budget proposal on Monday that no state agency would be spared from such an outcome if the tax package were not adopted. "It will be draconian," he said. "And Draco was not a very kindly chief executive."

# 'Trust Us' Won't Cut It Anymore

## The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 18, 2011

By *Kevin Carey*

"Trust us."

That's the only answer colleges ever provide when asked how much their students learn.

Sure, they acknowledge, it's hard for students to find out what material individual courses will cover. So most students choose their courses based on a paragraph in the catalog and whatever secondhand information they can gather.

No, there's isn't an independent evaluation process. No standardized tests, no external audits, no publicly available learning evidence of any kind.

Yes, there's been grade inflation. A-minus is the new C. Granted, faculty have every incentive to neglect their teaching duties while chasing tenure—if they're lucky enough to be in the chase at all. Meanwhile the steady adjunctification of the professoriate proceeds.

Still, "trust us," they say: Everyone who walks across our graduation stage has completed a rigorous course of study. We don't need to systematically evaluate student learning. Indeed, that would violate the academic freedom of our highly trained faculty, each of whom embodies the proud scholarly traditions of this venerable institution.

Now we know that those are lies.

Richard Arum, a professor of sociology and education at New York University, and Josipa Roksa, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, recently completed a study of how much 2,300 statistically representative undergraduates—who enrolled as freshmen in a diverse group of 24 colleges and universities in 2005—had learned by the time they (in theory) were ready to graduate, in 2009. As a measuring tool, the researchers used the Collegiate Learning Assessment, a respected test of analytic reasoning, critical thinking, and written communication skills. Their findings were published this month in *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (University of Chicago Press) and in an accompanying white paper. It is, remarkably, the first study of its kind.

Their finding? Forty-five percent of students made no gains on the CLA during their first two years in college. Thirty-six percent made no gains over the entire four years. They learned *nothing*. On average, students improved by less than half a standard deviation in four years. "American higher education," the researchers found, "is characterized by limited or no learning for a large proportion of students."

The results for black students were particularly sobering. It turns out that the racial achievement gaps that shock the conscience in K-12 education get worse when students go to college. Those who see affirmative action as the defining issue for minority-student opportunity should look again. The biggest injustice falls on the majority of black students, who attend nonselective colleges—and thus don't engage with affirmative action—and all too often fail to learn.

Critics like Charles Murray will probably say those students should not have gone to college in the first place. But that would amount to condemning them for the failures of their institutions, because the study found that how much students learn has a lot to do with how much colleges ask them to work. After controlling for demographics, parental education, SAT scores, and myriad other factors, students who were assigned more books to read and more papers to write learned more. Students who spent more hours studying alone learned more. Students taught by approachable faculty who enforced high expectations learned more. "What students do in higher education matters," the authors note. "But what faculty members do matters too."

The study also found significant differences by field of study. Students majoring in the humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, and math—again, controlling for their background—did relatively well. Students majoring in business, education, and social work did not. Our future teachers aren't learning much in college, apparently, which goes a long way toward explaining why students arrive in college unprepared in the first place.

Financial aid also matters. The study found that students whose financial aid came primarily in the form of grants learned more than those who were paying mostly with loans. Debt burdens can be psychological and temporal as well as financial, with students substituting work for education in order to manage their future obligations. Learning was also negatively correlated with—surprise—time spent in fraternities and sororities.

Some will question whether learning can be fairly measured with a standardized test. But the Collegiate Learning Assessment has been validated by numerous independent studies. The fact that the results are sensitive to academic and curricular rigor tells us that the instrument measures more than just innate aptitude. Students who are asked to work harder learn more than similar students who are not.

Others might argue that students gain specific knowledge in the disciplines not picked up by the CLA. But as college leaders constantly emphasize, the most important part of higher education is learning how to think, not accumulating facts and figures. In any event, I'm sure those who disagree with *Academically Adrift's* findings will provide counterevidence that meets the high standards of scholarship and empiricism embodied by their own institutions of higher learning.

The study makes clear that there are two kinds of college students in America. A minority of them start with a good high-school education and attend colleges that challenge them with hard work. They learn some things worth knowing. The rest—most college students—start underprepared, and go to colleges that ask little of them and provide little in return. Their learning gains are minimal or nonexistent. Among them, those with a reasonable facility for getting out of bed in the morning and navigating a bureaucracy receive a credential that falsely certifies learning. Others don't get even that.

Consider too that the study measured the growth of only those students who were still in college two and four years later. The all-too-common dropouts weren't included. It's a fair bet their results were even worse.

Who is hurt the most by all this? Students saddled with thousands of dollars in debt and no valuable skills, certainly. Even worse, workers who never went to college in the first place, languishing in their careers for lack of a college credential. To them, the higher-education system must seem like a gigantic confidence game, with students and colleges conspiring to produce hollow degrees that nonetheless define the boundaries of opportunity.

This study should be a wake-up call for the Obama administration. The president's goal of substantially increasing college completion by 2020 is admirable. But the students on the margins of college completion are much more likely to fall into the danger zone of poor preparation, low admissions selectivity, and lack of academic rigor. New federal policies need to ensure that they don't just earn a degree, but actually learn something along the way.

Fortunately, the way forward is clear. The students who learned the most in the study came from all manner of academic backgrounds. Nobody is doomed to failure.

Colleges can start by renewing their commitment to the liberal arts. Let's be honest—a lot of students are majoring in business simply because they plan to get jobs in businesses and need a degree of some kind to do it. Making college less vocational will actually help more students learn the skills they need to succeed in their careers.

The study suggests that we have overcomplicated the practice of higher education. It comes down to what it always has—deep engagement with complex ideas and texts, difficult and often solitary study, the discipline to write, revise, and write again. What students need most aren't additional social opportunities and elaborate services. They need professors who assign a lot of reading and writing. Professors, in turn, need a structure of compensation and prestige that rewards a commitment to teaching. Some object that today's hedonist undergraduates won't do the work. But the research suggests otherwise. Colleges are responsible for taking the first step toward reaching a newer, higher equilibrium of mutual expectations.

Federal and state lawmakers should stop providing hundreds of billions of dollars in annual subsidies based purely on enrollment, and should start holding colleges accountable for learning. Lawmakers also need to shore up crumbling budgets, restrain college prices, and mitigate higher education's growing dependence on debt.

Deep down, everyone knows that learning has long been neglected. But they don't *want* to know. Policy makers who have poured gigantic sums of money into financial-aid programs designed to get people into college don't want to know that many of the graduates, leaving with degrees in hand, didn't learn anything. College presidents don't want to know, because fixing the problem means arguing with faculty. Faculty don't want to know, because it would expose the weakness of their teaching and take time from research. Students don't want to know, because they'd have to work harder, and it would undermine the value of their credentials.

It has been a conspiracy of convenience. This study should bring the "trust us" era of American higher education to a close.





# **New Book Lays Failure to Learn on Colleges' Doorsteps**

## **The Chronicle of Higher Education**

January 18, 2011

*By David Glenn*

A book released today makes a damning indictment of the American higher-education system: For many students, it says, four years of undergraduate classes make little difference in their ability to synthesize knowledge and put complex ideas on paper.

The stark message from the authors of *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (University of Chicago Press) is that more than a third of American college seniors are no better at crucial types of writing and reasoning tasks than they were in their first semester of college (see excerpt).

The book is already drawing its share of critics, who say the analysis falls short in its assessments of certain teaching and learning methods.

"We didn't know what to expect when we began this study," said Richard Arum, a professor of sociology at New York University who is one of the book's two authors. "We didn't walk into this with any axes to grind. But now that we've seen the data, we're very concerned about American higher education and the extent to which undergraduate learning seems to have been neglected."

In the new book, Mr. Arum and his co-author—Josipa Roksa, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia—report on a study that has tracked a nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 students who entered 24 four-year colleges in the fall of 2005. The scholars do not name those 24 institutions, but they say they are geographically and institutionally representative of the full range of American higher education. The sample includes large public flagship institutions, highly selective liberal-arts colleges, and historically black and Hispanic-serving colleges and universities.

Three times in their college careers—in the fall of 2005, the spring of 2007, and the spring of 2009—the students were asked to take the Collegiate Learning Assessment, or CLA, a widely-used essay test that measures reasoning and writing skills. Thirty-six percent of the students saw no statistically significant gains in their CLA scores between their freshman and senior years. (The book itself covers the students only through their sophomore year. The full four-year data are described in a separate report released today by the Social Science Research Council.)

And that is just the beginning of the book's bad news.

The scholars also found that students devote only slightly more than 12 hours per week to studying, on average. That might be in part because their courses simply aren't that demanding: Most students take few courses that demand intensive writing (defined here as 20 or more pages across the semester) or intensive reading (40 or more pages per week). Mr. Arum and Ms.

Roksa's finding was based on students' self-reports, but a new analysis of Texas syllabi by *The Chronicle* offers additional evidence of the same point: Business and education majors at public four-year colleges in Texas are typically required to take only a small number of writing-intensive courses.

"What concerns us is not just the levels of student performance," Mr. Arum said, "but that students are reporting that they make such meager investments in studying, and that they have such meager demands placed on them in their courses in terms of reading and writing."

Another finding of the book is that racial and ethnic gaps in CLA scores persist—and even widen, in the case of African-American students—over the course of four years of college. That appears to be partly because African-American students are more likely to attend less-selective colleges with less-intense academic environments, the authors write.

David C. Paris, executive director of the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability, a two-year-old organization of college presidents and provosts, says the book is important.

"It's a reminder that many of our institutions really aren't set up to make undergraduate education a priority," he said. "The organizational systems and structures that we have really aren't set up for 21st-century challenges."

### **Value of Group Study Questioned**

One element of the book that is already drawing criticism is the finding that score gains on the CLA were smaller, all else equal, if the students said they did most of their studying with friends, as opposed to alone. That insight cuts against the grain of the recent trends toward collaborative and experiential learning.

Studying in groups "seems to be difficult for students to pull off in a way that promotes learning, as opposed to being a social occasion," Ms. Roksa said.

"A lot of institutions and actors in higher education have invested a lot in this idea of collaborative education," Mr. Arum said. "These are very well-intentioned folks, and I know that they've been taken aback by what we found."

One such person is George D. Kuh, a professor emeritus of higher education and founding director of the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University at Bloomington.

"For many students, studying alone can be as good as any other strategy," Mr. Kuh said. But for others—especially those with weaker high-school preparations—there is a long train of evidence to support collaborative learning.

Mr. Kuh generally praises the book, but he says that the scholars erred by not using more-detailed questions about students' college experiences. On the question of studying in groups, for example, he believes Mr. Arum and Ms. Roksa would have learned more if they had asked students about what went on inside their classrooms as well as outside. As the study stands, it is impossible to know whether the students who reported that they often study in groups were

doing so because they had been given group assignments by their professors, or simply because they preferred to study with friends.

Alexander C. McCormick, director of the National Survey of Student Engagement, shares Mr. Kuh's concern. "They really just used two questions," Mr. McCormick said. "How many hours do you study alone, and how many hours do you study with peers. When people say 'I'm studying with peers,' presumably that includes sitting in a room with a bunch of students where the TV is on and there are all kinds of distractions. But presumably there is a subset of students who are actually sitting around a table and really working on the material with other students and striving to understand. By mixing those two very different kinds of activities, I think we run a risk of overinterpreting this finding as an argument against collaborative learning."

Mr. Arum and Ms. Roksa concede that their study does not reveal anything directly about the value of collaborative assignments. In theory, they say, such projects could be very effective. But they add that they doubt that many faculty members have been trained to design effective collaborative projects.

"If professors aren't even being trained in traditional pedagogy," Mr. Arum said, "it's a lot to ask them to pull off these more-complex collaborative models."

Mr. McCormick also has a broader concern about the way the book might be received by the public. Even if many students are not acquiring writing and reasoning skills, he says, that does not mean that their college educations have been worthless.

"One way that this could all be misinterpreted," Mr. McCormick said, "is, 'College students aren't learning anything.' But the book really doesn't say anything about the development of subject-matter knowledge in the majors. If you did a similar study and administered subject-area GRE tests to students in their freshman and senior years, I expect that we would see a lot better results."

Mr. Arum is not so sure. "I'll just give you an empirical figure in response," he said. "Thirty-five percent of students report that they spend five or fewer hours per week studying alone. Do we really think that there is going to be a lot subject-specific learning when students are giving so little effort? I actually think that you'd find much the same pattern with subject-specific knowledge."

## **Cultures of Rigor**

Dewayne Matthews, vice president for policy and strategy at the Lumina Foundation for Education, which supported Mr. Arum and Ms. Roksa's study, says that the book's findings about racial and ethnic disparities should be taken seriously by university leaders. "These continuing disparities cannot all be explained away by looking at differences in high-school preparation," he said. "We have a responsibility here. Colleges need to look much more carefully at how students learn, and how they can support that learning."

Mr. Arum and Ms. Roksa don't see any simple remedies for the problems they have identified. They discovered more variation in CLA-score gains within institutions than across institutions, and they say there are no simple lessons to draw about effective and ineffective colleges.

In the statistical analysis that sums up their book, they identify two significant college-level variables. First, all else equal, students' CLA scores are more likely to improve if they report that faculty members at their college have high expectations. Second, students' scores are more likely to improve if they say they have taken at least one writing-intensive course and at least one reading-intensive course in the previous semester.

It might sound trite, Mr. Arum says, but those observations boil down to the lesson that colleges must find ways to build cultures of academic rigor. He says that task is something that each campus will need to do for itself. It would be a huge mistake, he believes, for the government to impose a new learning-accountability regime from outside.

Donna Heiland, vice president of the Teagle Foundation, which also supported the study, agrees. "Even though this is a book with a lot of sobering news," she said, "I think it also contains some things to be encouraged by. First of all, it's encouraging to see new evidence that college does have an effect"—that is, that writing-intensive and reading-intensive courses actually do improve the CLA scores of students across the ability spectrum.

"It would be depressing to think that students just sorted themselves into colleges based on their SAT scores and life histories, and then essentially marched in place," Ms. Heiland said.

### **Sustained Difficulties**

Mr. Arum and Ms. Roksa are continuing to track the students in their study, and they are already at work on a sequel to *Academically Adrift*.

The students who graduated on time, in 2009, have been rewarded with a miserable recessionary labor market. As of late last year, 35 percent of those recent graduates were living with their parents or other family members, and 9 percent were unemployed. Among those who were working full-time, only 17 percent were earning more than \$40,000 a year. (The authors have not yet done analyses to determine how these postgraduate outcomes are correlated with the students' CLA scores or any other element of their college experiences.)

Among the most troubling findings from the postgraduate survey, Mr. Arum says, is that 30 percent of the recent graduates said that they read a newspaper "monthly or never," even online.

"How do you sustain a democratic society," Mr. Arum said, "when large numbers of the most educationally elite sector of your population are not seeing it as a normal part of their everyday experience to keep up with the world around them? We need higher education to take the institutional responsibility for educating people broadly to see this as a basic part of civic life."

That notion of institutional culture, Ms. Heiland says, is the basic lesson that the public should take from the book. "I don't want people to walk away blaming people," she said. "You can say, Oh, the problem is with the students because they don't study enough. The problem is with the faculty because their priorities are elsewhere. There's truth in all that. But for me, what's really powerful about the book is that it talks about the culture of higher education and talks about how the work of one player is related to the work of everyone else. We need to talk about higher education as a system."



# They Made Me a Despot

## The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 17, 2011

*By Ms. Mentor*

**Question:** I just finished my first semester as chair of the "Ziggurat" department at our university, and I'm disgusted by the immaturity and irresponsibility of my faculty. Before semester's end, they needed to turn in student grades, assessment reports, yes or no votes on the strategic plan, and responses to the poll on redecorating the faculty lounge.

The grades were the only thing everyone did. For the others, I sent out polite reminders, and I was relentlessly nice—except about the assessment materials, which are required by higher-ups. I stewed and finally blew up by e-mail: "Do the assessment or we'll consider that you didn't fulfill your contractual assignment this semester." They pushed me to be threatening, and wasn't I right?

**Answer:** Well, yes and no.

If the only thing that matters is submission to your iron will, you probably got obedience on the assessment reports. But if you want a peaceable kingdom without endless rumblings and mutinous plots, you've planted some toxic weeds in your garden.

Threatening people with reprimands, delayed checks, or unspecified grave consequences may work once. So does public flogging. But if you have to work with people continuously, it's better to have them smiling, not seething.

Professors everywhere are tardy with paperwork. It's blamed on absentmindedness, or on Dwelling in the Realm of Higher Thoughts. Grading students, though, is an intellectual task. Ideally it is a concert, a celebration of achievement. About grading, no one asks, "Why are we wasting our time on this?" It's a duty and a student motivator, and you'll be nibbled endlessly if you don't do it right. You'll hear whining over the phone.

But any other paperwork brings out the faculty resisters: "I have a bad cold" and "My spam filter ate the memo" and even "My grandmother died. She always does that when I have a tight deadline."

Nevertheless, you, Ms. Mentor's correspondent, are the designated grown-up, and so you must take charge of the playground. Ask yourself, "What really must be done by my brilliant, talented, top-quality faculty members? And what can be finessed quickly, farmed out, or happily forgotten?" If you seem to be sharing their pain about time misspent, professors may not skitter away from you in the halls.

Ms. Mentor admits that assessment must be done. It is part of today's poisonous political climate: also known as The Accountability Regime, or Blame the Teachers. Faculty members must take

time from their real work—teaching—to fill out forms about how their time is spent, about their grade distributions, their rubrics, their gimmicks. They must devise little exercises to demonstrate their students' "learning outcomes" to bureaucrats who, in most cases, know next to nothing about the subject being taught and learned.

Ms. Mentor's eyes glaze over. But she forges ahead, as you must. You must be strong. And if dignity fails, as it will, you must do what memoirist [Clancy Martin](#)'s mentor told him to do: Be "part stand-up comic, part door-to-door salesman, part expert, part counselor."

You must jolly faculty members into doing those little tasks. You can offer snacks ("Everyone who does the assessment paperwork by Tuesday gets a fresh Fig Newton"). You can cajole ("C'mon, team, let's run this ball down the field so we can get on with our lives"). You can tell them that you know better than Freud, with his crude claim that artistic souls can only be motivated by "fame, money, and the love of beautiful women." Offer your faculty yachts and diamonds.

Devise a clumsy cheer that everyone will hate: "We're the best in the West! We're truly blessed! We've been assessed!"

Do tell your faculty members what goodies may actually turn up, if the mighty assessment gods smile upon your department. You'll be accredited again. You may be lauded. You may get "monumental" raises. If you lie outrageously but charmingly, faculty members will know it, but they'll also know you're on their side. If they mostly like you, as a fellow sufferer with a wan sense of humor, your job's ever so much easier. You have the same cross to bear.

As for faculty approval of your strategic plan: Ms. Mentor believes that all strategic plans should be ratified by their constituents. All offer fine sentiments: "We will strive for excellence, to have the best Ziggurat program in our region." Some are sweetly optimistic: "We seek 10 new tenure-track faculty lines in Ziggurat theory." They are expressions of hope, which should always be nourished.

She urges you to round up the usual voters. Exhort them to vote yes, tally their votes, and declare that the will of the faculty has been expressed. Hail the new plan!

If anyone reading this would like Ms. Mentor to vote for a strategic plan, e-mail her and she'll be delighted to do so.

As for the department lounge redecoration: Some things really do not have to be done by democratic balloting or polling. Clever timing can avoid the appearance of despotism. Just as midterms begin, send around a department e-mail seeking volunteers to get the lounge redecorated.

Unless you're in a design department, few people will be passionate about the lounge decor, especially at the busiest time of the term. The only volunteers will be the few, the special who really do care. Give them a deadline, tell them the budget limits, and send out a memo inviting suggestions for The Lounge Redecorating Committee, which has now been empowered to do its great work, unfettered.



But what if the lounge walls are painted puce?

"I'm sorry, but you had your chance to volunteer" is always a good, rueful defense. If the lounge becomes known as Puce Palace, everyone will bond through laughter and loathing. Ms. Mentor wouldn't be surprised if they name it after you.

Your job is to be a fall guy, but also a cheerleader and protector. You must sometimes martyr yourself, taking the arrows meant for your flock. Do not let your anger erupt in mail or print, because it cannot be unsaid.

"Off with their heads!" works only once.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's approach—"Don't spit in the soup. We've all got to eat."—gives everyone at least some morsels of pleasure to look forward to. In the new year, think of yourself not as a despot, but as a chef.

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**Question:** For a change, our department's holiday party didn't turn to brawling and debauchery. As director, should I send a note of praise to everyone for behaving like ladies and gentlemen at last, or keep a dignified silence?

**Answer:** Silence.

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## Community colleges seek ways to deal with unstable students

Santa Monica College is among those working with an online training program to learn how to help those in trouble.

January 16, 2011 | By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

He wears stained and dirty clothing and his grades are sliding. His mid-term essay contains disturbing passages and his behavior in class is causing increasing concern.

The student is showing clear signs of psychological distress, and the question for instructors and staff at Santa Monica College is how to approach him. Should they try to talk to him, refer him to counseling or call campus police?

This student exists only in the virtual world, part of an online training program that is helping educators at Santa Monica and other colleges around the country learn the best ways to reach out to troubled and possibly dangerous students.

The shooting rampage in Tucson has again focused attention on how colleges treat such students and whether the institutions have the staff, training and resources to spot the potential for outbursts of violence.

The increasingly bizarre behavior of Jared L. Loughner, the suspect in the Arizona shootings, resulted in his suspension months before the shootings, from a college in Tucson. The school, Pima Community College, does not have a mental health center. Its policy is to refer students with mental health issues to licensed professionals off-campus, a college official said.

Loughner was a student at Pima from 2005 until last fall, when he was suspended for violating campus conduct codes, including causing disruptions in the classroom and library. He was told he could not return without clearance from a mental health professional stating that he posed no danger, according to the college.

Traditionally open to all comers, community colleges face particular challenges dealing with unstable or mentally ill students, officials said.

The colleges serve many students on the economic margins; a large number of military veterans, including those suffering from physical and emotional trauma; and former felons seeking a fresh start. Because they are mainly commuter campuses, there may also be relatively few opportunities for students and faculty to build relationships that could help detect troubling changes in behavior.

The sour economy has increased demand for community colleges even as many have cut back on services, including counseling. At the same time, educators at colleges across the country report seeing increasing numbers of students exhibiting signs of mental illness and other problems.

"We consider access fundamental to our mission, but it gets to a point where one has to reconsider if that is realistic," said Norma Kent, vice president for communications of the American Assn. of Community Colleges.

In California, educators are pursuing legislation that would allow college districts to deny enrollment to a student expelled from another district for violent acts. Under current law, the districts may disclose information about student conduct but are not required to do so. And there is no central repository for information about student expulsions and suspensions.

More than four-year institutions, community colleges reflect their surroundings, for better or worse.

"We're definitely feeling more like a pressure cooker," Georgia Lorenz, Santa Monica College's dean of academic affairs, said after last week's training session.

"We may have 70 students trying to crash a class already full with 45 students. There's a lot more pressure on students and faculty, and our counseling center is slammed all the time. All this can exacerbate bad behaviors."

Despite budget cutbacks, the college, which has 34,000 students, has been able to boost its mental health services in recent years. In the wake of the 2007 campus shootings at Virginia Tech, Santa Monica was among a number of educational institutions across the country to create a crisis prevention team. Last year, the college added a post-doctoral intern to a psychological staff that also includes two full-time licensed psychologists and two pre-doctoral interns. Last spring, it launched the simulated training program.

So far, more than 50 faculty and staff have used the program, and the college is seeking funding to make it available to more employees.

In December, the school developed an online referral form for professors concerned about students' behavior, and within a week there were six referrals, said Brenda Benson, the school's dean of counseling and retention.

One case involved a student who was upset after being dismissed from a program; others were from instructors concerned about bizarre writings by students but afraid to confront them. Some students need counseling about relationships or schoolwork. But others, Benson said, have autism, schizophrenia or drug addiction, conditions that require referrals to outside mental health specialists.

Faculty members are thrust into the delicate position of intervening with troubled students. "They are the ones with a relationship with the student," Benson said. "I've had instructors say this is not what I signed up for, but this is now a part of what all faculty have to do."

In 2008, a student enrolled at a campus in the Peralta Community College District in the Bay Area after he had been expelled from another district for assaulting an administrator. Peralta officials could take no action because he had done nothing there to warrant expulsion. After he began using violent language and accused college officials of being out to get him, the district was able to get an order restricting him from any of its campuses for three years.

The incident spurred the introduction in 2009 of an Assembly bill, AB 1400, which would have allowed community college districts to request information from other districts — and to receive an answer within 5 days — to determine whether a student continued to pose a threat to the safety of others. Districts would have been authorized to hold hearings to allow or deny enrollment or to enroll such a student conditionally.

It had broad support in the Legislature, but the bill was vetoed by then- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who said it would create an uneven standard by denying admission because of a criminal act the student may have committed previously.

He urged the California Community Colleges chancellor and board of governors to work on a policy to address the issue. But the bill's author, Assemblyman Paul Fong (D-Sunnyvale) said last week that he intends to reintroduce the legislation this year.

"The bill would have extended campus security throughout the system," said Fong, a former community college trustee. "With an open enrollment policy, a student can get expelled and go to another college district without anyone's knowledge."

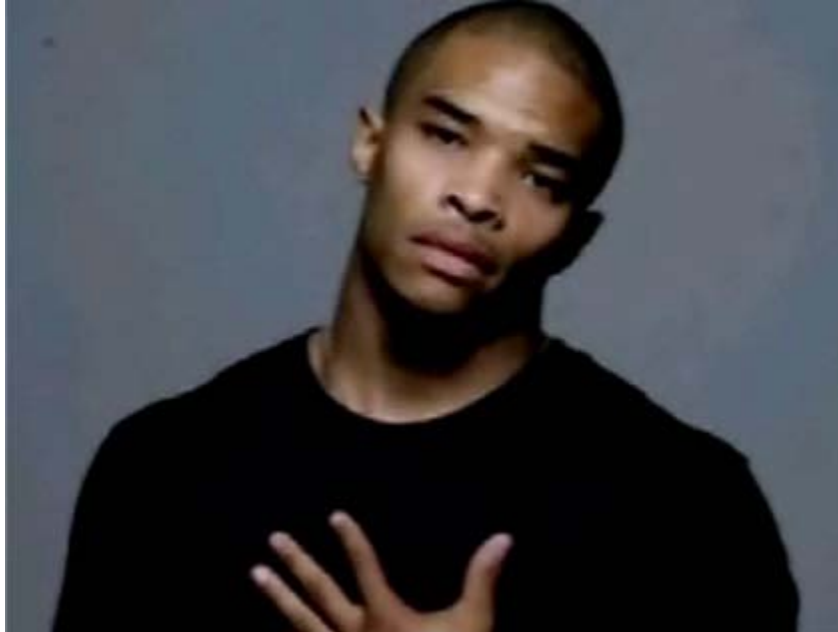
Under current law, the state's public schools, as well as the University of California and the California State University, are more protected than the community colleges from such situations, said Thuy Thi Nguyen, general counsel of the Peralta district, which co-sponsored the bill and is seeking to build a coalition to support the new legislation.

An association of student services officers who oversee counseling, mental health and other services at the state's the community colleges has endorsed the effort, said Audrey Yamagata-Noji, a member of the group and vice president of student services at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut.

"For us to put this forward says that we need something stronger that enables us to take better action," she said.

# Review Urged In Wake Of Nearly Nude Man's Shooting

January 15, 2011 8:09 AM



Reggie Doucet was wearing boxer shorts when he was fatally shot by police in Playa Vista.

**LOS ANGELES (CBS)** — In the wake of the shooting death of a nearly naked man in Playa Vista, civil rights activists want a review of policies for officers dealing with intoxicated or mentally disturbed people.

Reggie Doucet Jr., 25, a model who played football in college, apparently argued with a cabbie bringing him home from a Hollywood club. During the argument, he stripped naked outside the Crescent Park West condominiums, where Doucet reportedly lived.

When police arrived, they were able to get him to put on some boxer shorts, but he allegedly ran off. Police say they confronted him in the doorway of a building, where Doucet began fighting with the officers.

When he allegedly tried to grab an officer's gun, he was fatally shot.

"I heard them try to detain him and he would not comply and there was a fight, a physical fight, and then I heard two shots," neighbor Monica Vogelbacher said.

The two officers who fought with Doucet were treated for minor injuries — both suffered blows to the face — and a squad car was destroyed in a crash in the 4200 block of Centinela Avenue as backup officers rushed to the scene.

Earl Ofar Hutchison of the Los Angeles Urban Roundtable and Eddie Jones of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Association say they'll discuss the shooting at a news conference and want Chief Beck to review Los Angeles Police Department policies for officers dealing with intoxicated or mentally disturbed people.

Doucet, about 6 feet and 190 pounds, played defensive back at El Camino College and Middle State Tennessee University. He was raised in Prunedale, Calif., where he was a track and football star at North Monterey County High School.

He played junior college football at El Camino College, before he earned a scholarship to Middle Tennessee.

Doucet had been working as a personal fitness trainer and part-time model, Ellison said. He was unmarried, but has daughter who is 3 or 4 years old, Ellison told The Times. He also reportedly had been working as a nightclub promoter.

"What bothers me is that if he was naked, they knew for a fact that he didn't have any weapons on him," he said.

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## Alpha Gamma Sigma Chapter Established at El Camino College Compton Center

- Posted by [Hub City Livin'](#) on January 15, 2011 at 7:21pm in [ECC Compton Center](#)

To help students further develop their leadership skills, a chapter of the Alpha Gamma Sigma (AGS) Honor and Scholarship Society was recently established at El Camino College Compton Center. The new chapter was launched with a kick-off event last semester, which was coordinated by the Student Life Office and the Associated Student Body (ASB) to provide qualifying students with information about the organization and what benefits it offers.

In addition to supporting the academic endeavors of its members through study groups, tutorials and scholarship opportunities, the honor society offers ways to gain leadership positions, participate in community service, and meet other students with similar academic interests.

Originally founded in 1926 by Dr. William T. Boyce, head administrator of Fullerton Junior College, Alpha Gamma Sigma is an academic honor society and service organization of the California Community College system. Its purpose is to foster, promote and recognize outstanding scholarship, and to encourage and provide opportunities for participation in community service activities.

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better to be members of AGS and most chapters set a minimum number of hours of community service that members must perform. At its annual convention, AGS awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to members who excel in academics and in service.

Qualifying students may contact the Office of Student Life for information on joining AGS and to obtain an application. Additional information about AGS can be found at <http://www.ags-honor.org/>.

### About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community's education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Many classes are available and offered at an affordable price—fees are only \$26 per unit. The catalog and class schedule for day, evening, weekend and online courses is available on the website at [www.compton.edu](http://www.compton.edu) or may be picked up at ECC Compton Center located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA. For more information, call 310-900-1600.

## Police kill man in Playa Vista LA Times

Officers say Reginald Doucet Jr. was naked when he attacked officers near his condo.

By Kim Christensen, Los Angeles Times

*January 15, 2011*

A former college football player who was naked and yelling in a Playa Vista street after arguing with a cab driver was shot to death early Friday by a Los Angeles police officer he allegedly attacked, officials said.

The shooting occurred about 3:30 a.m. when two patrol officers responded to a disturbance call in the 5200 block of Crescent Park West and found the man "yelling and behaving erratically," according to an LAPD statement.

The man was later identified by the county coroner and his ex-sports agent as Reginald Doucet Jr., 25, a former defensive back at El Camino College and Middle Tennessee State University. The shooting occurred just outside Doucet's condominium building, said his neighbor and former agent, Chris Ellison.

Police said the officers attempted to calm the agitated man and talked him into putting on his boxer shorts, but he ran when they tried to apprehend him. They approached him again, but he ran once more.

"When the officers tried a third time to detain the suspect in the apartment complex doorway, the suspect immediately attacked both officers," the statement said. "The suspect repeatedly punched both officers in the face and head and at one point tried to take one of the officer's guns."

That's when one of the officers, identified only as a male with 17 months in the department, shot Doucet twice, police said. He died at a hospital.

The other officer has five years with the LAPD and was "battered and dazed," police said. One of the men was treated at a hospital for face and ankle injuries and the other for injuries to his jaw and head.

According to his Middle Tennessee State biography, Doucet was 6 feet tall and weighed 190 pounds when he played there. Raised in Prunedale, Calif., he was a track and football star at North Monterey County High school, where he also played basketball, his biography says.

Doucet played junior college football at El Camino College near Torrance before winning a scholarship to Middle Tennessee State, said Ellison, who tried without success to help Doucet land in the National Football League.

Doucet had played in lesser leagues in Florida and Tennessee, Ellison said, and more recently worked as a personal fitness trainer and part-time model. Doucet was single but has a daughter



who is 3 or 4 years old, Ellison said.

Ellison, who did not witness Friday's shooting or the events that preceded it, said he could make no sense of any of it, including Doucet's alleged erratic behavior.

"Maybe he was belligerent, I don't know, but I have never seen him drunk. Never. Violent? Never," he said. "He was an outstanding young man who was trying to make a better life."

Ellison also questioned the need to shoot Doucet.

"What bothers me is that if he was naked, they knew for a fact that he didn't have any weapons on him. Were the police really getting whooped that bad that they needed to shoot him — twice? They can't pull out a billy club? They can't Tase him? They have to shoot him? The more I think about it, the more it bothers me."

# Fatal LAPD shooting involved ex-college football player/model

## LA Times

January 15, 2011 |

The man Los Angeles police officers shot in Playa Vista during a scuffle Friday was identified as a former college football player.

Reginald Doucet Jr., 25, played defensive back at El Camino College and Middle Tennessee State University.

According to his Middle Tennessee State biography, Doucet was 6 feet tall and weighed 190 pounds when he played there. Raised in Prunedale, Calif., he was a track and football star at North Monterey County High School, where he also played basketball, his biography says.

Doucet played junior college football at El Camino College near Torrance before winning a scholarship to Middle Tennessee State. Doucet more recently worked as a personal fitness trainer and part-time model, said his neighbor and former agent, Chris Ellison. Doucet was single but has a daughter who is 3 or 4 years old. KTLA-TV (Channel 5) reported Doucet also worked as a model.

The shooting occurred about 3:30 a.m. when two patrol officers responded to a disturbance call in the 5200 block of Crescent Park West and found a naked man "yelling and behaving erratically," according to an LAPD statement.

Police said the officers attempted to calm the agitated man and talked him into putting on his boxer shorts, but he ran when they tried to apprehend him. They approached him again, but he ran once more.

"When the officers tried a third time to detain the suspect in the apartment complex doorway, the suspect immediately attacked both officers," the statement said. "The suspect repeatedly punched both officers in the face and head and at one point tried to take one of the officer's guns."

That's when one of the officers, identified only as a male with 17 months in the department, shot Doucet twice, police said. He died at a hospital.

-- Kim Christensen

## The House's New Higher Ed Leader

January 14, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Given the state of the U.S. economy and the promises of Republican lawmakers to cut the deficit, much if not most of the Congressional activity surrounding higher education in the 112th Congress is likely to unfold in the House and Senate committees that set federal spending and overall budget and tax policies. But to the extent that the education committee in the House of Representatives weighs in on issues affecting colleges and universities, a face unfamiliar to many in higher education will have a large say.

The chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Minnesota's John Kline, announced in December that he had asked Representative Virginia Foxx, a North Carolina Republican, to head the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, which deals with postsecondary issues of all sorts, including financial aid, work force development, and the like.

Foxx, a House member since 2005, spent much of her pre-Congress career in higher education, starting as a secretary at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, teaching and administrating at Caldwell Community College and Appalachian State University, and ultimately serving several years as president of North Carolina's Maryland Community College. She also spent 10 years in the North Carolina Senate.



The North Carolinian, who boasts of being "one of just 38 Republicans to score a 100 percent approval rating from the American Conservative Union," has left a relatively light imprint on higher education policy so far. In 2005, she proposed a successful amendment to block the federal government from establishing a student unit-record database, and she has been critical of the Education Department's efforts to crack down broadly on for-profit higher education. Beyond higher education, she has broken into the public spotlight primarily because of her outspoken nature -- occasionally getting herself into trouble, as when she suggested in 2009 that the story behind the 1998 hate-crime killing of Matthew Shepard was a hoax.

Foxx agreed to answer questions from *Inside Higher Ed* about her views and agenda for the new Congress. The exchange follows:

**Q. You are one of the few members of Congress to have worked in higher education. How did that experience shape how you view higher education now that you're in Congress?**

A. Both my work experience in higher education and my other life experiences have shaped my views. I spent many years working in administration and teaching in university and community college settings. Additionally, I served 12 years on a local school board, which also provided a unique outside perspective on higher education.

Together these experiences have helped convince me that government funding for higher education is most effective the closer the funding source is to the institutions. This is why I support focusing our efforts on state and local government and removing much of the federal red tape, mandates and funding mechanisms that hinder innovation and accountability.

**Q. What do you perceive to be the biggest problems facing American higher education right now?**

A. Though perhaps not unique to higher education, a major problem facing institutions of higher education is the delay in fully grasping the magnitude of the fiscal problems facing our country. Many sectors are grappling with this issue and higher education is by no means exempt.

America is facing a real turning point, where we are borrowing about four out of every 10 dollars we spend. We must come to terms with this reality and focus on avoiding the fate of nations like Greece and Ireland who borrowed and spent far beyond their means.

As we work through new standards of spending restraint, we will concentrate on accountability for every taxpayer dollar -- and that must include the dollars spent on higher education. We are in a different world than when the economy was booming, and everyone needs to adjust to that reality.

**Q. You have on previous occasions questioned the wisdom and necessity of federal grants for college students. Can you expand on that view? Would you favor cutbacks in the federal Pell Grant Program, which has nearly doubled in size in the last three years?**

A. Considering the fiscal crisis facing the federal government it would be entirely premature to take any program or department off the table when it comes to spending freezes or cuts. Higher education funding, including Pell Grants, must be carefully examined for areas of inefficiency and waste to ensure that taxpayers are getting a good return on their money. If potential savings are identified, Congress should be judicious in targeting those areas.

**Q. More generally, you have said you don't believe there's an appropriate role for the federal government in higher education. How far do you think the current, fairly significant role can -- or should -- be rolled back?**

A. The federal government's involvement in higher education can and should be scaled back gradually in the coming years. Ideally we'd be able to reduce the burdensome federal

bureaucracy and delegate much of the funding and policy decision making to state governments. This would help to foster better solutions to the specific issues confronting higher education and provide improved accountability for taxpayer dollars.

**Q. The Education Department has proposed significant new regulation of for-profit colleges. Do you believe there are significant problems in the sector that warrant the department's aggressive approach?**

A. There are certainly some bad actors in the world of for-profit colleges. These entities must be held accountable for their actions. At the same time I am concerned that the Department may be acting with overly broad brush strokes and disproportionately cracking down on the sector. I'm eager to see the data behind the Department's regulatory actions and will be exploring whether these regulations are unnecessary or, alternatively, if they need to be expanded across higher education.

**Q. Many college officials complain that they are over-regulated by the federal government. Do you agree, and do you envision attempts by the Republican-led House to deregulate?**

A. There's an old saying, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." Over-regulation is a problem across the world of education. The federal government tends to over-regulate because of the power it wields with its funding stream. If we can move decision-making and funding to the state and local level we can bypass the problem of educators drowning in paperwork, compliance costs and red tape.

**Q. Your Republican colleagues in the House are calling for repealing the health care law. You strongly opposed the overhaul of the student loan programs that was enacted in the same budget reconciliation legislation. Would you favor a similar repeal of SAFRA, to restore the Federal Family Education Loan Program, and do you foresee (and would you favor) an attempt to do that?**

A. There will be many opportunities in the coming months to look closely at federal student loan programs. I expect to hold hearings to gain additional insight on how student loan programs are performing and if recent changes are proving to be effective or ineffective. At this point I don't know that a repeal would be a top priority.

**Q. What message would you send to higher education administrators and professors reading this?**

A. American taxpayers are demanding more accountability and frugality in how their tax dollars are spent. This means any entity that receives tax dollars, including those in higher education, will be impacted as Congress grapples with the record-breaking federal deficits and tries to bring back a balanced budget.

— **Doug Lederman**

# Should colleges take steps to prevent repeat of Tucson-like tragedy?

By IBTimes Staff Reporter | January 18, 2011 4:10 AM EST

Even as the nation continues to grieve over the lives lost in the mindless violence unleashed by one mentally deranged individual, another debate rages on over the role of educational institutions in adding to the vitriolic fury and frustration of individuals like Jared Lee Loughner, who shot at Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and 17 others, killing six and injuring the rest.

The question under heated discussion in several circles is whether the Pima Community College, where Loughner was a student and which had suspended him till he sought clearance from a mental health professional, could have done something more to bring him the medical attention that he deserved and thus prevent a tragedy of this dimension. More importantly, are there lessons from the Arizona shooting that colleges across the United States can use to have policies and actions in place that might arrest recurrence of such events in the future?

The Pima Community College had suspended Loughner after several bizarre outbursts and online rants, asking him to return only after he had got himself certified to be mentally fit by a psychologist. Loughner had never returned. Now, with the advantage of hindsight, many feel that perhaps the college could have imposed an involuntary mental health evaluation, especially since laws in Arizona make it easier to do so in case any concerned party applies for a court-ordered evaluation. This could have led to mandated isolation and treatment of an individual who was very evidently unhinged and increasingly antisocial. As one of his ex-classmates in Pima has written in her website, "He was the kind of guy I pictured bringing a gun to class and shooting everyone." Many even question the incendiary effect of dismissive action like suspension or expulsion on the psyche of such individuals as Loughner.

Defenders of the college system and community college leaders, however, view the malaise as being much deeper and feel it would be unreasonable to make the institution a scapegoat in this case. It would indicate insensitivity towards the realities of community colleges, which are non-residential and have tens of thousands of students studying in them. As a result they do not have either the resources or circumstance to offer the kind of support services that would be inevitable in any four-year residential program. Monitoring each and every student to note signs of behavioral oddity is almost as difficult as getting them active medical or professional assistance on campus even when it is noticed.

As Norma Kent, spokeswoman for the American Association of Community Colleges, told *Inside HigherEd*, "the organization's latest survey found that while all community colleges offer services comprising academic and behavioral counseling, those with psychologists on staff are in the minority. Rather, the colleges are more likely to refer students to off-campus health professionals."

While colleges and society at large continue to explore better reactions and systems to deal with the threats arising from aberrant or disruptive behavior on campus, a few steps within the constraints of budget and numbers could at least reduce the chances of such incidents, feel experts. Writing in *The New York Times*, Marcus Hotaling, director of the Counseling Center at Union College refers to one method being used by many schools known as a behavioral intervention team (BIT). Hotaling describes this as "a group that comes together to eliminate the fragmented care that can happen when smaller groups of people have information, but the information is not shared. These teams are action-oriented, so a plan is typically made about who will reach out to a disruptive student, and how. Larger schools have also started to create satellite offices of counseling centers, which makes it easier to get access to care." The urgency and speed at which action is taken is also extremely important.

However, it holds equally true that the presence of the most agile and efficient counseling professionals or teams on campus would still not address situations where the offender resists any kind of assistance or drops out. In a country where mental and emotional illness is steeply on the rise among college students (as revealed by an official release from the American Psychological Association) and where issues surrounding infringement of personal liberties and privacy have attracted the most vehement reactions, effective tackling of disconcerting and indicative behavior may require deeper and more layered consideration of existing systems and policies.

## Judge declines to delay Compton elections

By Ann M. Simmons, Los Angeles Times

*January 19, 2011*

A lawsuit says at-large elections for City Council weaken Latinos' voting power, and the plaintiffs are pushing for district-restricted voting. They wanted elections put off until their case was resolved at trial.

A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge has denied a request to delay Compton's municipal elections until a trial determines whether the city's at-large elections violate the civil rights of Latinos by diluting their voting power.

In a tentative ruling hashed out with attorneys Tuesday, Judge Ann I. Jones said the plaintiffs, three Latina residents, had not presented enough evidence to warrant postponing Compton's April primary and June general election. Jones said she would take the matter under submission, before issuing a definitive judgment within the week.

"We are on pins and needles until we get a decision, at least for now," said Compton City Atty. Craig Cornwell.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs expressed disappointment but insisted that the preliminary ruling would not derail a trial.

"We thought we had a compelling case," said Joaquin G. Avila, whose clients sued the city last year under the 2001 California Voting Rights Act.

The plaintiffs contend that the city's at-large elections to choose a representative for each of Compton's four districts weaken Latinos' voting power, and they are pushing for district-restricted voting.

Such a change could give a Latino candidate a greater chance of winning a council seat, the plaintiffs argue. Over the last two decades Compton's population has shifted from predominantly African American to about two-thirds Latino, though blacks still constitute the majority of registered voters. No Latino candidate has ever been elected to the City Council or any other city office.

"What we have here is a complete absence historically of Latino representation," Avila told the court Tuesday.

Anita Aviles, Compton's deputy city attorney, pointed out that voters would have to agree to change Compton's city charter, which dictates that elections be held at-large.

Even if voting had been by district for the April 2009 primary, in which two Latino candidates lost, analysis showed that the outcome would have been the same, city attorneys said.

But lawyers for the plaintiffs have presented statistical analysis from academic and demographics experts to show that voting is racially polarized in Compton. Their data found that



Latino voters typically support Latino candidates, while blacks seldom support them. Latinos, however, could win election in districts with denser populations of registered Latino voters, the data analysis found.

Such a district could be drawn, according to the analysis, based on 2000 census figures.

But Jones, the judge, found inconsistencies in the findings of the plaintiffs' authorities, questioned the reliability of the analysis and expressed reservations about one expert whose credentials she called "sketchy."

"It's my conclusion ... I did not have sufficient evidence to decide on the likely success of the merits," Jones said Tuesday. "The balance of harm did not weigh in favor of the plaintiffs."

## In Compton, once crime-ridden, residents finally feel safe

Wed Jan 19, 12:11 pm ET

By [Liz Goodwin](#)

With a huge drop in homicides in a historically crime-ridden part of Los Angeles County, longtime residents say they finally feel safe sitting on their front porches and visiting neighborhood parks.

Compton, Calif., tallied only 24 homicides in 2010, down from 36 in 2009 and 87 in 1991, [according to L.A. Times crime reporters](#). All in all, [homicides plunged](#) by 67 percent in less than five years, and other [violent crimes are also way down \(PDF\)](#).

"You see more people out and about," former Compton City Clerk Charles Davis told the Times. "You see a lot more people outside. There was a time when, if you had to be outside, you would be in your backyard, not your front yard."

Minnie Jones, 84, says she's taking walks in the park again. She was mugged in the late 1990s by three young men who stole her purse and car keys.

How has Compton achieved the turnaround?

Local authorities credit a 10-year effort to strengthen community ties and fight gangs. Residents tip off cops to possible crimes and help prevent youths from joining gangs, sheriff's officials say.

Compton's crime drop fits into the national picture: In the first six months of 2010, violent crime [fell more than 6 percent in the United States](#) -- the fourth consecutive year that crime dropped. In fact, violent crime has been falling nationally since about 1993.

Researchers have theorized many causes: the country's skyrocketing prison rates? The aging population? (Young men commit more crimes.) [Increased access to abortion?](#) Improved policing techniques, like the ["broken windows" approach of former L.A. Police Chief William Bratton?](#)

Some experts had expected the recession and high unemployment to reverse the trend, on the assumption that poverty and desperation fuel crime. But economists say the relationship between the economy and crime is more complicated than that.

"Forty-year-old non-offenders who get laid off are unlikely to start robbing 7-11s," University of Colorado sociology professor Tim Wadsworth [told The Lookout in September](#). "Most of us think that the relationship between the economy and crime rates has more to do with high rates of joblessness influencing the health and well-being of communities." He says that gradual community breakdown could last years before producing more criminal activity.

Still, some communities are seeing the effects of tough economic times on their ability to fight crime. Officials in [Camden, N.J., forced half of the police force out the door](#) this week because of budget cuts. The police chief [told the Newark Star-Ledger](#) that people shouldn't bother calling the police to report minor traffic accidents, vandalism or thefts. More than 150 positions were cut; the mayor had wanted the police force to take a 20 percent pay cut to avoid the layoffs.

## Fewer districts say they're in trouble

### Sleepless nights ahead for Joel Montero of FCMAT

Posted on 1/19/11 • Categorized as [Revenue and taxes](#)

By [John Fensterwald - Educated Guess](#)

Ten school districts have acknowledged that they're headed toward insolvency this year or next. An additional 91 districts say they won't be able to make ends meet two years from now, based on current projections.

The combination represents about 10 percent of the state's school districts. It's preliminary and may rise after county offices of education review districts' financials over the next month. (Montero did not reveal the schools on the list.)

But the totals are lower than the 174 districts that last spring said they were headed for fiscal trouble. That's surprising to Joel Montero, CEO of **Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team** (FCMAT), the state agency that straightens out districts' financial messes. He told district administrators last week at **School Services of California**'s annual budget outlook presentation in Sacramento that he assumed more districts would file negative self-certifications, indicating impending financial trouble.

"What keeps me up at night are the districts that certified themselves as positive" and shouldn't have, Montero said. Six of the last eight districts that became insolvent had filed a previous report showing no problems on the horizon.

The latest numbers Montero cited will be in the First Interim Status Report for districts that the state Department of Education will release in March. They're a snapshot, based on **districts' financial condition** as of Oct. 31. A Second Interim Status Report, based on what shape they're in as of Jan. 31, will be released in June. Districts will base that report on Gov. Brown's proposed 2011-12 state budget, which basically provides the same level of funding as this year.

But that's tenuous. If voters in June reject Brown's request to extend \$8.8 billion in temporary taxes – or the Legislature cannot muster a two-thirds majority to put the question on the ballot – K-12 schools will lose \$2 billion in funding. If that happens, Montero predicts as many as 50 districts will become insolvent, and hundreds will file "qualified" certifications, meaning they foresee troubles making payroll within the next three years.

In last year's **Second Interim Status Report**, a record 160 districts were certified as qualified and 14 filed "negative" reports. Between then and last fall, districts received unexpected good news. In the state budget that it passed in October, the Legislature added back \$270 per student in K-12 funding that districts hadn't expected when they built their 2010-11 budgets. That cushion could account for the expected drop in districts' "qualified" ratings in the latest report.

But these are volatile times for K-12 schools. Montero and John Gray, vice president and CEO of School Services of California, agreed that districts' best strategy is a big cash reserve. "I would never apologize for a large fund balance. Hedge your bets against cash insolvency," Montero said.

The Legislature has actually lowered the required cash reserve to 1 percent of a district's general fund for large districts (Los Angeles and San Diego) and 3 percent for small districts. But Gray said that, on average, 10 percent would be safer.

Bargaining units may fight large reserves, because there's less money to bargain over. But, with the state proposing to defer paying a record \$10 billion owed to districts into the next fiscal year, districts cannot take a chance of being caught short, Gray said

# Community colleges chief opposes Brown funding changes

## California Report

January 19, 2011 | [Louis Freedberg](#)



Flickr/Charline Tetiyevsky

California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott says Gov. Jerry Brown's proposal to change the way community colleges are funded is "not a good idea," and that he will try to convince the Legislature to amend it.

Scott told California Watch that [Brown's proposal](#) would unfairly punish colleges with high enrollments of "vulnerable students," and reward colleges serving students in high-income suburban areas who are more likely to succeed.

California's 112 community colleges receive funding based on the number of students who are in class on "Census Day," typically the first day of the fourth week of classes. The college continues receive funds, regardless of how many students drop out or fail to complete the class by the end of the semester.

In his budget message, Brown said:

This policy provides an incentive for colleges to take advantage of the system to maximize funding which also distorts the overall (full-time student) workload completed by the colleges. In effect, colleges are being funded for a higher level of students than actually attend courses.

"We are anxious to improve our success rate," Scott said. To that end, he has appointed a 21-person [Student Success Task Force \[PDF\]](#) that meets for the first time today. It is charged with

coming back in a year with a number of recommendations, including "identifying national funding models to incentivize completion rates."

Scott said that the Brown proposal to change the community college funding formula "could have unfortunate consequences that no one has thought through carefully."

Scott said the community colleges could live with another controversial Brown proposal to increase community college fees from \$26 to \$36 a unit, even though he would have liked to see "not quite as sharp an increase."

But he said basing funding based more on completion than on attendance could have unintended consequences. For example, a college might be tempted to offer class which had high completion rates, while dropping tougher classes which had lower completion rates.

Instructors might also be tempted to keep a student in class and to give him or her a passing grade with an eye on the funding the student brings, even if it was clear the student was not able to handle the course work.

Scott said that expecting community colleges to have the same level of completion as more selective California colleges is unrealistic. "The state of California tells us to accept every high school graduate and says to UC, 'All you have to do is take the top 12.5 percent,'" he said. "That is not a level playing field."

The larger issue, he said, is that Brown's budget calls for \$290 million less in funding than the system is getting this year, even taking the fee increase into account. Just about the only option will be to further cut course offerings. "We are going to bring out these issues when we get to the Legislature," he said. "We are not going to stand idly by and say, 'We are going to educate a lot more students with a lot less money.'"

Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the [Campaign for College Opportunity](#), an advocacy organization, noted that Brown's budget does not provide a prescription for how the funding changes would be implemented, and that his intent is clearly that key stakeholders work together to come up with a plan they can agree on.

"He is not spelling out the formula; he says course completion has to matter, and that everyone has to come to the table to figure out a formula to assure completion," said Siqueiros.

# Green jobs showed strong growth in California in 2008, data show

Clean-tech and alternative-energy firms added 5,000 jobs, a survey by Next 10 found. About 174,000 Californians were working in eco-friendly fields by early 2009, with nearly a quarter of the jobs based in L.A.

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By Tiffany Hsu, Los Angeles Times

*January 19, 2011*

Jobs at clean-tech or alternative-energy companies have flourished in California, with nearly a quarter of them based in Los Angeles, a new study has found.

Employers offering jobs in fields such as solar-power generation, electric-vehicle development and environmental consultation added 5,000 jobs in 2008, the latest data available. In all, about 174,000 Californians were working in eco-friendly fields by early 2009, compared with just 111,000 in 1995, said nonprofit research group Next 10.

The study, which culled data from government and private reports, was released late Tuesday.

The so-called green workforce expanded 3% from January 2008 to January 2009 — three times the growth of overall employment around the state. Standouts include the energy-generation sector, which includes renewable-energy efforts such as wind and hydropower.

"There's very few business sectors that can employ people across every region, especially in a state as big as California," said entrepreneur F. Noel Perry, who founded Next 10. "Green is providing a very solid foundation for future growth."

The Bay Area grew the most, with an 8% jump in 2008. The region now represents 28% of green jobs and 26% of companies offering the positions.

San Diego had a 7% boost as the local energy generation industry — primarily solar and wind companies — beefed up hiring 39% in 2008 compared with the year before.

In Orange County, which also did well, workers were hired to support the burgeoning fuel-cell market, anchored by the National Fuel Cell Research Center at UC Irvine. Employment in clean transportation also jumped as newcomers such as hybrid-electric-vehicle maker Fisker Automotive moved in and employers drew from the region's strong existing auto heritage.

But green hiring is down slightly in the Los Angeles area and the Inland Empire, where the effect of the economic downturn on the construction industry trickled into energy-efficiency retrofitting companies.

*tiffany.hsu@latimes.com*

# Complex Measures of Success

**January 19, 2011**

The Voluntary Framework of Accountability, a project that aims to create national metrics gauging how well two-year institutions serve their students and fulfill their assorted missions, unveiled stage one of its proposed measures for pilot testing last week.

Formally introduced two years ago, the VFA is managed by the American Association of Community Colleges and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education. The project has attracted the attention of educators who have long been critical of the federal government's main method of judging community colleges: the three-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students. Still, some educators have been leery of the project, given the wide range of community colleges' missions, demographics and funding formulas across the country.

## Measure for Measure

Last week, the VFA announced 40 pilot institutions that will test its custom metrics. The community college testers are located in 29 states and include 37 individual institutions, two statewide systems and one multi-college district. AACC recently published the draft technical manual that these pilot institutions will use to collect data, so that other institutions can calculate their own proposed VFA outcomes and submit critiques of them.

Prong one of the proposed data to be collected looks at an institution's "college readiness measures," such as the proportion of students who complete all developmental education; "progress measures," such as the percentage of students retained from one semester to the next; and "outcomes and success measures." These latter will count, separately, those who earn an associate degree, certificate or other credential; those who transfer to a four-year institution without a degree or credential; and those who leave in both good and bad academic standing.

Prong two of the proposed data to be collected focuses on an institution's "workforce, economic and community development measures." The data points include "career and technical education measures," such as the median wage growth of students who complete a program; "non-credit courses," such as the number of state- and industry-recognized credentials awarded; and "adult basic education/GED measures," such as the proportion of students who complete a GED, enroll in more postsecondary education or gain employment.

The final, and most debated, prong of the proposed data to be collected aims to assess student learning outcomes. Just how the VFA will make this measurement is still being determined; however, the framework does provide a list of "existing national benchmarked measures of student learning outcomes" that pilot institutions may use, including the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, among others. VFA is also challenging "the field" to develop student learning outcomes assessments that "meet criteria of relevance to community colleges and their unique student populations."



## **Why Collect?**

The VFA, according to its organizers, is a work in progress. And they argue that this pilot testing will help highlight which measurements are most fair and practical in judging community college success.

Kent Phillippe, AACC's senior research associate, stressed that “these are not the final measures by any stretch of the imagination.” He admitted that some of the measurements being required are not commonly used or may not even be calculable yet.

“The conversation we had was, 'Let’s define things that are important to community colleges, even if we don’t have the data to support those things yet,' ” Phillippe said. “Still, we want to get a sense of, can they collect it? Then, if they think it’s important, we’ll put placeholder measures out there until we can get that data made available.”

Addressing some of the early criticism the voluntary framework has received, Phillippe said, “We’re not trying to recreate the [Voluntary System of Accountability],” a joint effort of the two main associations of public four-year colleges and universities: the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

“For example, we’re looking at career and technical education,” Phillippe argued. “We’re looking at progress measures and not just at outcome measures. We’re focusing on developmental education. We’re very different from the VSA, which is very much about the endpoint. Also, we’re still finding ways to look at student learning outcomes in a constructive way.”

Phillippe also noted that while the VFA is collecting measures that are “consistent across all institutions,” that does not mean that it is “always appropriate to compare them.” For instance, he said that a career and technical college may double-count some students in prong one, “the student progress and outcomes measures,” and in the second prong for assessing only its technical programs, but still decide that the latter data set is a better judge of its success when comparing it to a peer.

## **Potential Federal Impact**

Officials affiliated with the accountability framework, including Phillippe, acknowledge their hope that the VFA ends up influencing whatever federal reporting measures are recommended by the Committee on Measures of Student Success -- a group that was created by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, and whose 14 members were appointed by Education Secretary Arne Duncan. The panel met for the first time last October.

Some members of the education secretary’s committee are closely following the VFA’s work and hope to learn from it. Among them is Wayne Burton, president of North Shore Community College, in Massachusetts.

“It’s certainly ambitious,” Burton said of the voluntary framework. “I mean, they’ve got an awful lot of data to collect. I think that’s significant. I’ll be interested in how they do. Obviously, that should be fed into our committee. We’re kind of running on parallel tracks.”

Burton also applauded the “diverse” list of institutions that are pilot testing the program, and its attempt to measure work force success. Still, he said that the final report of his committee, which is due this fall, would be unlikely to mirror VFA exactly.

“This is such a complete list of data,” Burton said of VFA. “It’s unlikely what we produce [in committee] will touch on all of these.... We also have a public mandate to simplify this so that the public can understand it.”

Some participants in the VFA pilot acknowledge that its potential influence over any federal policy is at least part of the reason for their participation.

“We want to be part of that national conversation, and it’s an important one to have,” said Christina Whitfield, director of research and policy analysis at the Kentucky Community & Technical College System. “National benchmarking comes up all the time, so I would hope this would have an impact and synch up with emerging federal requirements. Hopefully we won’t generate lots of different metrics that we have to end up following.”

DeRionne Pollard, president of Montgomery College, echoed that sentiment.

“I’ve been supportive of and have embraced VFA for two specific reasons,” Pollard said. “One, I’m a great proponent of community colleges taking the opportunity to define ourselves and really demonstrate who we are. Community colleges have been traditionally defined by other people and, quite frankly, their definitions are not always adequate. Two, this recognizes the breath and depth of offerings we have in our house.... Any good policy maker should probably want to know how this sector defines itself.”

## **Data Collection Overload**

Even officials from institutions that are pilot testing the VFA are concerned about data collection.

For example, Whitfield noted that KCTCS would be unable to provide the VFA with information about the state’s adult basic education and GED systems because, even though they are housed in many community colleges, they are run by the state government. She also expressed concern about her system’s ability to get through all of the VFA metrics in the time frame requested, before the spring AACC convention.

Joe May, president of the Louisiana Community & Technical College System, whose system is a pilot tester of VFA, remains concerned about how it will measure work force development programs against one another, as some states will have a hard time providing data about the employment and wages of students who have finished technical programs because their data

systems are not connected. He also expressed concern about the difficulty of gathering information about noncredit work force development courses, which constitute a large proportion of the offerings at some technical colleges.

Still, May said that the VFA, even in its draft form, is better than nothing at all.

“This is a step in the right direction, and I think it’s being done the right way,” May said. “I see it as an important concept and one that is, in and of itself, a dramatic improvement over what we’ve been doing. It’s just a work in progress right now.”

### **Critics Remain**

Despite a rosy outlook from those involved, the VFA does have its critics on the outside looking in, who argue that its focus on student completion is bad for the community college sector.

“I note VFA’s continued and seemingly primary emphasis on student throughput even as the ubiquitous news today ... questions, persuasively, the quality of learning happening at our institutions of higher learning,” wrote Gary Brown, director of the office of assessment and innovation at Washington State University, in an e-mail. “Throughput is not competence. Retaining and graduating more students more quickly is a narrow view of quality learning. It is also problematic that the VFA’s proposed outcomes measures continue to target institutional comparisons, though studies confirm there remains more variation within institutions than between them, and there is little evidence that students ... comparison shop based on test scores they or employers value little if at all.”

Brown, who is also the head of the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology at Washington State, cites the American Association of Colleges & Universities’ Liberal Education and America’s Promise initiative and e-portfolios as “more useful ways to address legitimate needs for accountability that engage students and faculty in embedded and authentic projects.” He argued that “their utility and potential” has not been fully grasped by many educational leaders.

“Projects like the VFA and the VSA, though they purport to engage the good will of the educational community by virtue of their voluntary nature, are much more likely to obtund or eclipse the potential of more creative models that have better validity and, more importantly, much greater utility,” Brown wrote.

Susan Twombly, professor and chair of the department of educational leadership and policy studies at the University of Kansas, also expressed a number of concerns about the VFA. Among those she shared via e-mail are:

- “Do ordinary community colleges have the capacity to produce the data required of this system without Lumina or Gates funding?”
- “Who will use the results of VFA and how? This is not entirely clear from the website. If low stakes and for local use, colleges might comply honestly. If the stakes are high, how

will colleges react? Will they start taking different students so their data look better? Will they drop remedial education because those numbers make a college look bad?"

- "Assuming a nationally standardized assessment instrument can be developed, will students take it and take it seriously? Will colleges end up teaching to the test? Will the test determine what is taught?"

According to the official VFA schedule, pilot sites are to submit initial feedback on the proposed measures and framework in March. Then, in April, the VFA board plans to vet the measures and further modify the framework.

— **David Moltz**

# LYNWOOD HIGH GRAD FINDS NEW CHALLENGES IN COMPTON

By WAVE STAFF

Story Published: Jan 20, 2011

COMPTON — Recent Lynwood High School graduate Nataly Mora is the first person in her family to attend college.

Beginning her first year of higher education in late August, Mora chose to attend El Camino College Compton Center because the location is convenient to her home and she wanted a school with a “small campus atmosphere.”

“I like that the campus is smaller,” Mora said. “I would probably not be comfortable at a larger institution for my first time attending college.”

She also knows that she will attend a larger campus in the future.

“My goal is to graduate from El Camino College Compton Center with an associate degree and then transfer to a four-year university in California,” she said. “I definitely plan to transfer and I am considering a career in the criminal justice field.”

As far as staying on track with her educational goals, Mora will get all the help she needs at the college’s Transfer Center, which helps students with the university application process, provides campus field trips, and offers workshops covering all aspects of the transfer process.

Mora and other students at the campus that was known as Compton College until it was taken over by the state several years ago, are among the tens of thousands of students statewide who will benefit from a new streamlined process to transfer to a California State University. On Sept. 30, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law SB 1440, a bill that aims to facilitate the transfer of California community college students to the California State University (CSU) system. The statute goes into effect in the fall.

As part of a two-bill transfer reform package, SB 1440, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, requires for the first time in the state’s history that California community colleges offer associate degrees for transfer to the CSU system that would include only those courses required by the four-year university and would guarantee recipients admission with junior status. Students will be required to complete 60 units with a grade point average of at least 2.0.

The other bill in the transfer reform package, AB 2302, complements SB 1440 by strengthening implementation of the transfer reform pathway by requesting that the University of California system develop a transfer associate degree pathway similar to that of SB 1440.

Mora said she is looking forward to transferring to a four-year college or university, but in the meantime wants to make the most of her experience at the Compton Center campus.

“College is a must, and the only way to do better in my life,” she said. “I am proud to be the first person in my family to go to college.”

# Rethinking Evaluations When Almost Every Teacher Gets an ‘A’

## NY Times

THE BAY CITIZEN

By JENNIFER GOLLAN

Published: January 20, 2011

Grade inflation — a term normally associated with students — is widespread among Bay Area teachers, who receive so many favorable evaluations that it is impossible to tell how well they are performing, some educators say.

For the 2009-10 school year, just 40 out of 1,924 teachers — or 2 percent — reviewed by the San Francisco Unified School District received below-satisfactory performance reviews, district records show. Those figures are consistent with recent years: an average of 2.7 percent of teachers evaluated over the past five years received marks of “unsatisfactory” or “needs improvement,” records show. And education scholars say that in a system where all teachers are winners, a crucial gauge of teacher quality is essentially lost.

A similar pattern has emerged in nearby school districts. In the San Jose and Oakland Unified School Districts, for example, about 1 percent of teachers received ratings of “ineffective” or “unsatisfactory,” records for 2009-10 show.

Administrators emphasized that weaknesses in the evaluation system did not diminish the work of teachers who educate students under difficult conditions exacerbated by a state budget crisis that has increased class sizes and reduced financing for schools.

But the numbers reveal that the review process is effectively broken, parents and administrators said, at a time when the Obama administration is seeking to tie federal money for education to the use of teacher evaluations based on student performance. That policy is controversial, particularly among teachers, who say that a variety of factors — some beyond their control — should be taken into account.

“We have to create a better evaluation system that really names what high-quality instruction looks like,” said Superintendent Anthony Smith of the Oakland district. He favors including student performance as a factor in evaluations.

Linda Shaffer, a parent of two children in San Francisco schools and a founder of Educate Our State, an advocacy group led by parents seeking more accountability, said, “The numbers tell me that there is a low bar to jump over, which doesn’t tell me anything about the teachers in the classroom.”

Some districts across the country — including Oak Grove in south San Jose — have begun to change how they evaluate teachers, incorporating student-achievement data to assess a teacher’s performance.

But those districts are in the minority. Partly because of resistance from teachers unions, most districts do not factor student test scores into evaluations.

Educators said the wide-ranging and sometimes-vague standards weaken the evaluation process. “A majority of districts in the state and the nation currently have dysfunctional evaluation systems,” said Eric A. Hanushek, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. “They neither help any teachers to get better nor point to teachers that should move out of teaching.”

Until this school year, San Francisco lacked detailed criteria for evaluating teacher performance. Under a revamped system put into effect last fall, teachers will be evaluated according to how well they engage students, maintain decorum, grasp subject matter, plan lessons, help students progress and expand their teaching expertise. The evaluations do not hinge on student achievement.

Principals and assistant principals observe teachers in the classroom before drafting evaluations. Teachers are then ranked as “outstanding,” “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “needs improvement” or “unsatisfactory.”

Most veteran teachers in San Francisco are evaluated every two years. Teachers who rank “satisfactory” or above on their most recent evaluation are eligible to receive a “short-form review” the next time. In it, principals have limited space to describe a teacher’s strengths and challenges.

Superintendent Carlos A. Garcia of the San Francisco district said that in the past administrators might have been less demanding in their assessments because they had concluded that the system was ineffective. “People felt, What’s the point in trying to be tough in evaluations?” Mr. Garcia said.

“We have to create a cultural shift for principals and assistant principals to be more honest with us,” he said.

Mr. Garcia said he believed that the new benchmarks were likely to improve the process. He added that he “wouldn’t be opposed” to test scores’ being factored into staff evaluations.

San Francisco’s new standards will, however, have to be recalibrated to meet federal expectations. In an effort to reward states that link student achievement to teacher performance, Mr. Obama and the Republicans will probably negotiate a compromise this year to overhaul evaluations, the federal education secretary, Arne Duncan, wrote on Jan. 3 in The Washington Post.

In San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland, teacher evaluations are not used to determine merit raises or advancement, union representatives from those districts said. But administrators said they were an important measure of the quality of teaching. Even more rigorous standards would help administrators take disciplinary action against teachers who consistently underperform, educators said.

California’s education code, contractual obligations and the threat of expensive legal battles can sometimes prevent veteran teachers from being fired. No “tenured” teachers in San Francisco, those on the payroll for two years or more, have been fired in the last three years, records show. In contrast, teachers can be fired for any reason in their first two years. Of the 252 new teachers hired last year, 42, or 17 percent, were let go for various reasons, district records show.



Leaders of the San Francisco teachers' union say their evaluation system should be left alone. "I don't think using student achievement as part of teacher evaluations is effective," said Dennis Kelly, president of United Educators of San Francisco, which represents 6,000 teachers and other staff members.

Teachers should not be penalized for myriad factors affecting student, including parental involvement, Mr. Kelly said.

Linking student growth and teacher performance could also drive teachers from struggling schools, some teachers say.

"Everybody blames teachers for the problems in public schools," said Dennis Klein, a third-grade teacher at Bret Harte Elementary School in Bayview. "We need smaller classes and more time to plan lessons and teach."

Regardless of the criteria in use, however, it is difficult for San Francisco parents to assess their child's teachers. Evaluations are protected by privacy laws.

"Getting teacher-level information is impossible," Ms. Shaffer said. "It should be publicly available. It is a public system, paid for by taxpayers."

In the push for more teacher accountability, a growing number of school systems nationwide are trying different approaches. The value-added method, for example, rates teachers from best to worst using students' test scores. The Los Angeles Times enraged teachers last year when it published a series that included the rankings of about 6,000 elementary school teachers based on a value-added analysis. In south San Jose, administrators at the Oak Grove district say including student achievement in evaluations has helped bolster the district's Academic Performance Index, the state's measure of academic performance.

"Most of our students' scores have increased," said KC Walsh, president of the Oak Grove Educators Association, which represents 620 teachers and other employees. "The accountability has improved student achievement."

# A Path Is Sought for States to Escape Their Debt Burdens

## NY Times

By MARY WILLIAMS WALSH

Published: January 20, 2011

Policymakers are working behind the scenes to come up with a way to let states declare bankruptcy and get out from under crushing debts, including the pensions they have promised to retired public workers.

Unlike cities, the states are barred from seeking protection in federal bankruptcy court. Any effort to change that status would have to clear high constitutional hurdles because the states are considered sovereign.

But proponents say some states are so burdened that the only feasible way out may be bankruptcy, giving Illinois, for example, the opportunity to do what General Motors did with the federal government's aid.

Beyond their short-term budget gaps, some states have deep structural problems, like insolvent pension funds, that are diverting money from essential public services like education and health care. Some members of Congress fear that it is just a matter of time before a state seeks a bailout, say bankruptcy lawyers who have been consulted by Congressional aides.

Bankruptcy could permit a state to alter its contractual promises to retirees, which are often protected by state constitutions, and it could provide an alternative to a no-strings bailout. Along with retirees, however, investors in a state's bonds could suffer, possibly ending up at the back of the line as unsecured creditors.

"All of a sudden, there's a whole new risk factor," said Paul S. Maco, a partner at the firm Vinson & Elkins who was head of the Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Municipal Securities during the Clinton administration.

For now, the fear of destabilizing the municipal bond market with the words "state bankruptcy" has proponents in Congress going about their work on tiptoe. No draft bill is in circulation yet, and no member of Congress has come forward as a sponsor, although Senator John Cornyn, a Texas Republican, asked the Federal Reserve chairman, Ben S. Bernanke, about the possibility in a hearing this month.

House Republicans, and Senators from both parties, have taken an interest in the issue, with nudging from bankruptcy lawyers and a former House speaker, Newt Gingrich, who could be a Republican presidential candidate. It would be difficult to get a bill through Congress, not only because of the constitutional questions and the complexities of bankruptcy law, but also because of fears that even talk of such a law could make the states' problems worse.

Lawmakers might decide to stop short of a full-blown bankruptcy proposal and establish instead some sort of oversight panel for distressed states, akin to the Municipal Assistance Corporation, which helped New York City during its fiscal crisis of 1975.

Still, discussions about something as far-reaching as bankruptcy could give governors and others more leverage in bargaining with unionized public workers.

“They are readying a massive assault on us,” said Charles M. Loveless, legislative director of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. “We’re taking this very seriously.”

Mr. Loveless said he was meeting with potential allies on Capitol Hill, making the point that certain states might indeed have financial problems, but public employees and their benefits were not the cause. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a report on Thursday warning against a tendency to confuse the states’ immediate budget gaps with their long-term structural deficits.

“States have adequate tools and means to meet their obligations,” the report stated.

No state is known to want to declare bankruptcy, and some question the wisdom of offering them the ability to do so now, given the jitters in the normally staid municipal bond market.

Slightly more than \$25 billion has flowed out of mutual funds that invest in muni bonds in the last two months, according to the Investment Company Institute. Many analysts say they consider a bond default by any state extremely unlikely, but they also say that when politicians take an interest in the bond market, surprises are apt to follow.

Mr. Maco said the mere introduction of a state bankruptcy bill could lead to “some kind of market penalty,” even if it never passed. That “penalty” might be higher borrowing costs for a state and downward pressure on the value of its bonds. Individual bondholders would not realize any losses unless they sold.

But institutional investors in municipal bonds, like insurance companies, are required to keep certain levels of capital. And they might retreat from additional investments. A deeply troubled state could eventually be priced out of the capital markets.

“The precipitating event at G.M. was they were out of cash and had no ability to raise the capital they needed,” said Harry J. Wilson, the lone Republican on President Obama’s special auto task force, which led G.M. and Chrysler through an unusual restructuring in bankruptcy, financed by the federal government.

Mr. Wilson, who ran an unsuccessful campaign for New York State comptroller last year, has said he believes that New York and some other states need some type of a financial restructuring.

He noted that G.M. was salvaged only through an administration-led effort that Congress initially resisted, with legislators voting against financial assistance to G.M. in late 2008.

“Now Congress is much more conservative,” he said. “A state shows up and wants cash, Congress says no, and it will probably be at the last minute and it’s a real problem. That’s what I’m concerned about.”

Discussion of a new bankruptcy option for the states appears to have taken off in November, after Mr. Gingrich gave a speech about the country’s big challenges, including government debt and an uncompetitive labor market.

“We just have to be honest and clear about this, and I also hope the House Republicans are going to move a bill in the first month or so of their tenure to create a venue for state bankruptcy,” he said.

A few weeks later, David A. Skeel, a law professor at the [University of Pennsylvania](#), published an article, “[Give States a Way to Go Bankrupt](#),” in *The Weekly Standard*. It said thorny constitutional questions were “easily addressed” by making sure states could not be forced into bankruptcy or that federal judges could usurp states’ lawmaking powers.

“I have never had anything I’ve written get as much attention as that piece,” said Mr. Skeel, who said he had since been contacted by Republicans and Democrats whom he declined to name.

Mr. Skeel said it was possible to envision how bankruptcy for states might work by looking at the existing law for local governments. Called Chapter 9, it gives distressed municipalities a period of debt-collection relief, which they can use to restructure their obligations with the help of a bankruptcy judge.

Unfunded pensions become unsecured debts in municipal bankruptcy and may be reduced. And the law makes it easier for a bankrupt city to tear up its labor contracts than for a bankrupt company, said James E. Spiotto, head of the bankruptcy practice at Chapman & Cutler in Chicago.

The biggest surprise may await the holders of a state’s general obligation bonds. Though widely considered the strongest credit of any government, they can be treated as unsecured credits, subject to reduction, under Chapter 9.

Mr. Spiotto said he thought bankruptcy court was not a good avenue for troubled states, and he has designed an alternative called the Public Pension Funding Authority. It would have mandatory jurisdiction over states that failed to provide sufficient funding to their workers’ pensions or that were diverting money from essential public services.

“I’ve talked to some people from Congress, and I’m going to talk to some more,” he said. “This effort to talk about Chapter 9, I’m worried about it. I don’t want the states to have to pay higher borrowing costs because of a panic that they might go bankrupt. I don’t think it’s the right thing at all. But it’s the beginning of a dialog.”

# Dan Walters: Debt puts pressure on deficit-ridden California budget

By Dan Walters  
[dwalters@sacbee.com](mailto:dwalters@sacbee.com)

Published: Sunday, Jan. 23, 2011 - 12:00 am | Page 3A

Buried in Gov. Jerry Brown's new state budget proposal – one aimed at closing chronic operating deficits – is a decision to suspend sales of state bonds, at least for six months, this coming spring.

It's an implicit, and long overdue, official recognition that California has built itself a mountain of debt over the last decade, much of it acquired to paper over its budget deficits, and needs a breather.

Some of the debt is official – bonds issued by the state and local governments, with and without voter approval, to pay for public works, subsidize private development projects, refinance short-term borrowing and pay for such dubious purposes as stem cell research.

Some of it is unofficial, such as billions of dollars in deferrals of state payments to school districts with a promise to catch up later.

Some of it is virtually hidden, such as hundreds of billions of dollars in unfunded liabilities for local and state employees' pensions and retiree health care.

At the outside, California's state and local governments may be a trillion dollars in debt, but it's at least a half-trillion dollars – the difference being actuarial assumptions of long-term pension and health care obligations.

Even the relatively small official bond debt, however, is putting pressure on a deficit-ridden state budget. Brown remarked the other day that during his first governorship three decades ago, servicing state debt was an infinitesimal bit of the budget.

Since then, due to expedient and often irresponsible decisions by voters and politicians, debt service has climbed to over 6 percent of the budget. If the \$50 billion in authorized, but unsold, bonds were to be sold, it would climb to about 10 percent, according to Treasurer Bill Lockyer.

That, moreover, does not count proposed bond issues, such as the \$11.1 billion issue now ticketed for the 2012 ballot to pay for former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's water plan.

Can we really afford that \$9.95 billion bond issue for a bullet train system that appears to be a solution in search of a problem?

Why should taxpayers be paying for water supplies that traditionally have been financed by water users?

Why should the water bond include hundreds of millions of dollars in pure pork, such as a park in the district of former Assembly Speaker Karen Bass that has nothing to do with the state's water supply?

Can we allow our public pension systems to continue using unrealistically high assumptions of future earnings to mask their unfunded liabilities?

How long can we ignore the \$100 billion in unfunded costs for retiree health care?

Brown's one-time suspension of bond sales is, at most, a baby step.

If and when operational deficits are covered, he and the Legislature must make some hard decisions about debt or their work on the budget will be for naught.

## LAO: Charge perpetual students more

from "thought on Public Education - with twitter comments following

Set clear priorities for early course registration

Posted on 1/21/11 • Categorized as [Community Colleges](#), [Uncategorized](#)

By [John Fensterwald - Educated Guess](#)

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office is recommending that the Legislature determine priority students for course registration at the state's 112 community colleges and stop subsidizing courses of perennial students and repeat takers of recreational classes. Taking those steps would make the registration process more rational and could save \$235 million – more than half of what Gov. Brown is proposing to cut from the system's budget.

Setting uniform criteria for who gets to enroll first would limit the discretion that the independent colleges have to determine who gets to jump in line. But at a time of budget cuts, “when the system is already rationing, we’re recommending a more strategic approach,” said Paul Steenhausen, author of the [policy brief](#) “Prioritizing Course Enrollment At the Community Colleges.”

State law now requires that community colleges grant priority to military veterans and those in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services for full-time, low-income students. (See clarification in the comments section.) Beyond that, colleges have latitude to set priorities. Generally, the LAO said, the more credits a student has, the higher that student's priority for registering for courses – regardless of whether the student is progressing toward a clear goal. As a result, many first-time community college students out of high school, forced to wait for open registration, are not getting into courses they need.

The LAO is recommending that the highest priority go to continuing students who have completed an educational plan and are making satisfactory progress toward their goals – whether a certificate, an associate's degree, or a path to transfer to a four-year university. First-time students who have gone through the full matriculation process – taken assessments, met with a counselor, set goals, and perhaps filed for federal financial aid (a lot of students don't know they qualify for Pell grants) – would also get preference. Since counselors are in short supply, the Legislature would have to cut students some slack in completing the plan.

Big savings could come from limiting state subsidies to a student's first 100 units, the LAO says. Students seeking to transfer to a CSU or UC campus or pursuing an associate's degree generally need 60 units of coursework, and students pursuing technical training need less than that. A 100-unit ceiling would provide ample room for changing majors and completing basic skills courses without penalty. Beyond that, perpetual students would pay full freight – about \$190 per credit instead of \$26 per unit. Last year, 120,000 students who had already earned 90 or more units took courses. More than 9,000 of these students had accumulated 150 or more units. Charging them the unsubsidized cost would save the state \$175 million, according to the LAO.

In addition, 50,000 students repeated the same phys ed course for which they already had gotten credit or took a series of courses, like yoga, aerobics, and bowling, for which only one class is counted toward transfer (except for phys ed majors). Limiting state funding to only one activity would save \$60 million per year.

Targeting limited state funding to the priorities of the state Master Plan for higher education would increase opportunities for high-priority students, the LAO concluded, and reduce funding for lower-priority enrollment.

## 9 Comments



[Paul Steenhausen](#)

[January 21, 2011 • 7:17 am](#)

Hi John — Nice job on the piece. Just one clarification: State law requires that colleges grant priority to (1) current and former members of the military, and (2) concurrently enrolled high-school students (though, as we point out in the brief, statutory language is actually unclear re the latter group). Neither state law nor CCC regulations require colleges to assign priority to students in the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program (though, in practice, virtually all colleges to). -Paul

[Reply](#)



[John Fensterwald - Educated Guess](#)

[January 21, 2011 • 9:05 am](#)

Thanks for the clarification, Paul.

John

[Reply](#)



*John S. Leyba*



[January 21, 2011 • 11:25 am](#)

Interesting concept and one that would hit me directly in the wallet — I have taken many classes at DeAnza, already have a bachelor's degree elsewhere, and am now gearing back up for graduate school by taking math and science classes at SJ City College. Getting into Calculus has been a real pain; last semester over half the course dropped by the end of the term.

I would like to know: how will “the system” COUNT how many courses a student has taken? For instance, SJCC cannot see DeAnza's records; when I met with a counselor there they had ZERO access to my De Anza records and treated that as some sort of privacy protection. Seems like a racket for charging transcript fees if you ask me. In reality, will students simply game the system by hitting their limit at one college and then switching to another?

In this town alone we have THREE community college districts, which is just lunacy. Go up the Peninsula or East Bay a few miles and you hit even more. A student could really drive a little, and save a lot to borrow the old Gilroy Auto Row slogan!

There are many, many professionals who get laid off and immediately jump into professional development classes in the CCCs; around here it's typically programming and systems courses. From what I'm reading, I guess high earners with a degree who are retooling to get back to work faster will be bumped by a 19 year old out of high school. This concept needs to be considered more deeply for its effect on working (or unemployed) professionals. Not every “perennial student” in the community colleges is taking gardening, basket weaving, or PE classes.

On the other hand, some of the perennial students are local professionals who keep music programs humming. This fee escalation could decimate the music ensembles at the schools — many of them are made up of working professionals who keep coming back; their knowledge and techniques help fellow students who are actually “college age.”

There simply are not enough music students at grades 13 and 14 to fully load these ensembles with quality musicians, and most of the semi-pro folks aren't going to cough up thousands of dollars to perform there. So the “college age” students lose, in the long run.

John, let's go see some of the award winning jazz vocal groups at DeAnza while they are still there. I'll get a schedule.

[Reply](#)



4.

*Jan Dietzgen*

[January 21, 2011 • 12:08 pm](#)

John, I have a few students who are perennial students. The reason is lack of money. They can't register if they have a book fine. So they don't get the course they need to finish a series in one year. They have their car impounded, so they can't get to the night class, across town. It never ends. It is the poor who are the perennial students and they are just people who will be hurt by your scheme.

[Reply](#)

5.



*Ze'ev Wurman*

[January 21, 2011 • 12:29 pm](#)

While I definitely see some sense in the proposal, like John Leyba above I worry about the precise definition of “perpetual” students. More, I put a lot of blame on colleges themselves for promoting excessive course taking and course repeats. Until recently, the higher their enrollment was the more subsidies they got, which allowed them to grow fast and build not only muscle but a lot of fat. Many community colleges campus infrastructures looks as expensive as the more affluent private universities these days, while their teaching staff is disproportionally composed of underpaid, often below minimum wages, temporary adjunct faculty.

By all means CCs should use economic disincentives to take \*repeat\* courses, but at the same time they should also consistently discourage students from enrolling in courses without having the appropriate prerequisites, and they also should define prerequisites for all courses where there is above average dropout or regular over-enrollment.

In other words, let’s not allow the CC to point fingers only at students without looking in the mirror. Their own past empire building has much to do with their current crisis.

[Reply](#)

6.



*Gregory McGinity*

[January 21, 2011 • 1:45 pm](#)

John —

Thanks for your coverage of this issue.

The last time I looked at this issue, the data seemed to indicate that California’s community colleges have a higher percentage of students taken physical education/activity classes than any other state community college system in the country. I believe that if we looked behind the data we would find that it is actually cheaper (and more convenient) for individuals to sign up for a phys ed class at a community college and access the community college’s gym facilities than it is to join a private gym. This is particularly true if a Board of Governors fee waiver is provided. This is the kind of subsidy that needs to be eliminated.

Gregory McGinity

[Reply](#)

7.



*Caroline Grannan*

[January 21, 2011 • 2:19 pm](#)

But doesn't it encourage a healthier populace if there's a cheap and convenient way to take phys ed, which benefits society in the long run?

[Reply](#)

8.



*Pablo*

[January 24, 2011 • 5:18 pm](#)

How many millions would we save if we reviewed high school transcripts and charged community college students the full cost of any community college courses that they were taking due to having failed/done poorly in equivalent high school courses? Indeed, almost all of the math and English offerings in the community college system duplicate high school courses.

As much as I support the community college system, it does provide California's young people with a strong incentive to be lazy in high school. They know that they can make up what they've missed later, often for free, with a Board of Governors Fee Waiver.

[Reply](#)

# Should community colleges cut off lingering students?

California Watch

January 24, 2011 | [Erica Perez](#)



Flickr/Charline Tetiyevsky

A proposal to cut off access to community college students who linger too long – loading up their transcripts with gym classes, poor grades and far more units than they need to transfer or graduate – has merit and should be explored, the system's chancellor says.

A [report \[PDF\]](#) from the state legislative analyst last week recommended giving first-time students a higher priority for class registration, capping the number of taxpayer-subsidized units that students can take and limiting the number of times students can repeat certain courses on the state's dime – moves that could save an estimated \$235 million.

“I think what they’ve brought forth has merit, a lot of the ideas we have moved toward implementing, and we would certainly consider these ideas,” said Jack Scott, chancellor of the 112-college system.

The state’s community colleges have often been viewed as offering everything to everybody at a low price – currently \$26 per unit. But Scott said he has emphasized in his speeches that in an era of dwindling state aid, the colleges should focus more sharply on transfer education, career technical education and basic skills.

The proposals from the legislative analyst would help do that by directing state resources away from recreational students and those who aren’t making academic progress at a time when first-time college students are being turned away.

A September 2010 [report \[PDF\]](#) to the board of governors by Vice Chancellor of Technology, Research, and Information Systems Patrick Perry found that the system enrolled about 133,000 fewer first-time college students in 2009-10 than in the previous year – a decline that the report attributed to an 8 percent budget cut and the accompanying decrease in course offerings.

“In light of the huge mismatch between demand for classes and supply of classes we just thought this was important to examine now,” said Paul Steenhausen, fiscal and policy analyst for the legislative analyst’s office.

Some of the colleges' policies allow recreational students to take classes while first-time students are shut out.

For example, the law currently does not limit the number of state-subsidized community college units a student can take. As a result, thousands of students have amassed far more units than necessary to transfer, earn an associate's degree or get basic job skills.

In 2009-10, the system provided state-subsidized courses to nearly 120,000 students who had 90 or more units. More than 9,000 of these students had accumulated 150 or more units – the equivalent of five years of full-time college.

De Anza College in Cupertino had 297 students with 150 units or more – the highest number of any college in the system. Santa Ana College in Orange County had 3,660 students with 90 or more units – the highest figure in that category, as [these charts](#) show.

The legislative analyst's office proposed limiting the number of state-subsidized courses to 100 units per student. Those who want more classes could pay up to the full cost of instruction, which varies by college but is currently \$191 per unit on average statewide.

The 100-unit cap would allow for the 60 units required for degree or transfer, plus a wide margin for any remedial education requirements, basic skills or enrichment, Steenhausen said.

Scott said he could picture such a cap but only if it came with wiggle room. For example, he would not want to deny state support for a student who took 70 units at a community college, went on to get a bachelor's degree in English and decided years later she wanted to become a nurse. The nursing program would take 60 or more units and would put the student over the 100-unit cap.

“So in this case I think what we need to do is set a general rule and then have some means by which special cases could be considered,” Scott said.

However, Scott expressed enthusiasm about a recommendation to give students with excessive units a lower priority for class registration.

Colleges have broad discretion as to who gets priority for early registration. A recent Chancellor's Office [survey](#) of 76 colleges found that nearly 70 percent give priority to continuing students – those who enrolled in the previous term. Fewer than one-third of the colleges give priority to first-time community college students.

The survey did not name colleges, but it also indicated that 42 percent give registration priority to student athletes, 21 percent give priority to international students, who pay tuition, and 13 percent give priority to college staff.

The report proposed giving first priority instead to continuing students who have gone through assessment, orientation and counseling, and second priority to new students who have gone through these steps.

Scott liked the idea of prioritizing registration.

“What I do feel strongly about is that their suggestion that in some ways people who have earned as many as 100 units at the community college ought to be placed at the end of the line – I think that makes good sense,” he said.

The report also recommended that the colleges limit state funding for repeats of physical education and recreation classes, forcing students who want to take these classes more than once to pay up to full price instead.

In 2009-10, about 52,000 students repeated the exact physical education course that they had already completed in a prior term. For fine arts classes with an activity section, that figure was about 20,000 students. (See charts [below](#).)

"We acknowledge ... that these classes can be of value to residents and students, but there are other priorities, particularly today, that we think trump some of the recreational courses," Steenhausen said.

Scott said the colleges have taken initial steps toward limiting course repetition and are interested in pursuing further limitations.

“I really would have to ... look very carefully at each course and what it means about course repetition, but we’re open to studying that issue and limiting the number of times a person could repeat a course,” he said.

Charging full-freight for community college classes would likely stir controversy in some areas. The Santa Barbara City College trustees faced community outrage when they [voted in February 2010](#) to start charging fees for [20 recreational classes \[PDF\]](#), such as "BBQs and more" and "Salute to Sushi," the Daily Sound reported.

Four candidates for trustee positions at the college made the issue [part of their campaigns](#), saying the college had ignored the community's concerns.

The legislative analyst's recommendations – all of which would require legislative action – come as the colleges face a proposed \$400 million cut under Gov. Jerry Brown’s budget. Brown’s plan includes a \$10 per-unit fee increase that would generate about \$110 million, leaving the colleges with a \$290 million gap.

Given those realities, Scott said he is open to suggestions for saving money and preserving the core mission.

“We don’t have any glee about this, I can tell you for sure, we do it only out of necessity," Scott said. "If the state says we no longer want to provide you with the money that we did before, then we have to say we can no longer offer the full range of service that we once did.”

#### **Top five colleges – students with 150 or more units**

<b>College</b>	<b># of students</b>
DE ANZA	297
SANTA ANA	286
LA CITY	270

AMERICAN RIVER	266
EAST LA	264

**Top five colleges – students with 90 or more units**

<b>College</b>	<b># of students</b>
SANTA ANA	3,660
AMERICAN RIVER	3,236
EAST LA	3,135
CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO	2,878
MT. SAN ANTONIO	2,702

**Top five colleges – students who repeated the same PE course**

<b>College</b>	<b># of students</b>
CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO	2,069
FOOTHILL	1,599
DE ANZA	1,430
AMERICAN RIVER	1,370
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR	1,356

**Top five colleges – students who repeated the same art course**

<b>College</b>	<b># of students</b>
FOOTHILL	927
MONTEREY PENINSULA	685
CABRILLO	681
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR	661
PASADENA CITY	578

# The Sinking States

January 24, 2011

States are spending more than \$79 billion on higher education in 2010-11, a decline of 0.7 percent from last year, according to a report being released today by the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

While a cut of less than 1 percent might seem like a relief, given the magnitude of some of the cuts public higher education systems have faced in recent years, the report contains plenty of danger signs for the future. More than \$2.5 billion of the total state spending on higher education came from the federal government in the form of stimulus funds that have now run out. Over two years, state support is down nearly 2 percent -- in a period when the same economic downturn that has left state coffers empty has also spurred enrollment increases in much of public higher education, and greater demands for financial aid. And plenty of states are talking about additional cuts for 2011-12.

**"There are a lot of question marks right now and the revenue shortfalls in many states are casting a long shadow," said James C. Palmer, professor of educational administration and foundations at Illinois State and director of the study. "I don't see any indication that the states are pulling out of the recession."**

Indeed, in recent weeks, [California's Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, has proposed](#) cuts in state support of 18 percent cut for California State University; 16.4 percent for the University of California; and 6.5 percent for community colleges. [In Texas](#), a draft state budget is provoking outrage because it would close four community colleges. And [in Arizona](#), Gov. Jan Brewer, a Republican, last week proposed budget cuts for higher education that include a reduction for four-year colleges and universities of 20 percent, and cuts of 50 percent for community colleges.

The report by Palmer notes that the national average "masks considerable variations across states." Thirty-two states reported declines in state support for higher education for the year, with drops ranging from 0.3 percent to 13.5 percent. Another 16 states saw gains, from 0.2 percent to 24.7 percent. (Two states saw no change.)

Notably, however, there were six states where the percentage losses were in double digits: Missouri (down 13.5 percent); Delaware (12.4 percent); Iowa (12.2 percent); Minnesota (11.7 percent); Arizona (11.6 percent) and Oregon (10.8 percent). Only one state reported a double-digit increase: Wyoming (up 24.7 percent).

While states use different financial procedures to support higher education, the Illinois State-SHEEO study is considered the definitive source on state appropriations, with consistent rules for what is counted (state funds for operating support and student aid) and what's not (funds for building projects and tuition revenue). Federal research grants (a significant budget line for research universities) aren't counted, but the federal stimulus "stabilization" funds -- which were intended to support the operations of public schools and colleges -- are included because they support the same purposes as general state appropriations for higher ed.



While the stimulus funds continue to have a major impact this year, that impact is declining. Thirty states are spending stimulus funds on higher education support this year, compared to 43 last year. (States had some latitude on how much of the stimulus funds to spend in which year, and on the split between K-12 and higher ed.) The national proportion of total state funding for higher education nationwide that came from the federal stimulus funds (as opposed to state monies) declined to 3.5 percent this year, from 6.0 percent last year.

The following tables show changes in state support over one, two and five years (with the stimulus funds not in the base from five years ago), and the totals provided in state support for higher education this year.

### **Changes in State Support for Higher Education, 2010-11, over 1, 2 and 5 Years**

State	1-Year % Change	2-Year % Change	5-Year % Change
Alabama	+2.0%	-0.5%	+11.8%
Alaska	+2.8%	+7.5%	+36.5%
Arizona	-11.6%	-21.6%	-4.4%

[\[Click to view full table\]](#)

### **State Support for Higher Education, 2010-11**

State	State Funds	Federal Stimulus Stabilization Funds	Other Federal Stimulus Funds	Total Support
Alabama	\$1,455,273,417	\$118,743,545	0	\$1,574,016,962
Alaska	\$342,798,500	0	0	\$342,798,500
Arizona	\$1,025,534,200	0	0	\$1,025,534,200

[\[Click to view full table\]](#)

— [Scott Jaschik](#)

# For-Profit Colleges Open Another Front

January 24, 2011

WASHINGTON -- For months, leaders of for-profit colleges have promised to pull out all the stops to fight the Obama administration's plan to impose tough new rules on the sector. Advocacy groups have undertaken expensive and highly visible marketing campaigns aimed at undercutting the government's strategy with politicians and the public, and the colleges' lobbying has in turn prompted federal lawmakers -- especially given the heavy Republican gains in the newly convened Congress -- [to promise legislative intervention](#) to prevent a forthcoming set of rules on "gainful employment" from taking effect.

On Friday, the colleges formally unveiled the third part of their strategy: asking the courts to block several of the administration's regulations. The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (formally the Career College Association) [filed a lawsuit in federal court](#), asking a judge to invalidate three of [the dozen-plus new rules](#) that the Education Department [issued in October](#) to ensure the integrity of federal financial aid programs. The three disputed rules relate to state authorization of colleges, incentive compensation for recruiters, and misrepresentation of colleges' programs and results.

The lawsuit, which the group's president, Harris N. Miller, said it had chosen to file only after "our good faith efforts to work with the Department of Education to craft clear, workable rules through the negotiated rulemaking process and the public comment period failed," asks the court to temporarily bar the agency from enforcing three regulations that it says "go far beyond lawful regulatory efforts."

The for-profit colleges (and their defenders in Congress) have also vowed to take legal action if, as promised, the department issues regulations in the coming weeks aimed at requiring vocationally oriented colleges to prove that they prepare students for "gainful employment." Miller said APSCU could not hold off on filing a broader lawsuit until those new rules come out because its member institutions are having to deal right now with vexing issues raised by the October regulations, which take effect in July.

## On Their Own

The three rules challenged by the career college group have also generated their share of concern among some nonprofit college officials, since they apply broadly to all institutions whose students receive federal financial aid.

Miller said that his group had reached out to the American Council on Education to see if the main association of traditional college presidents wanted to join the lawsuit, but that ACE officials had demurred. Terry W. Hartle, the council's senior vice president for government and public affairs, confirmed late Sunday that the groups had discussed the lawsuit, but said that while ACE shared some of APSCU's concerns about state authorization and misrepresentation, its members "don't have the same high level of concern about incentive compensation" that for-profit institutions do. "We decided not to join," Hartle said.

The career college group's lawsuit faces an uphill climb. Several legal experts said, and Miller acknowledged, that federal courts give executive branch agencies broad deference to issue and carry out regulations, and historically show "a definite bias in favor of the agency," as Miller put it, when affected parties challenge executive branch regulatory efforts.

Agencies can be vulnerable when their processes for drafting the rules fall short or when they overreach and exceed the bounds of the underlying law, and the career college lawsuit challenges both the Education Department's process for issuing the rules (which it describes as "rushed, unfair and structured from the beginning to implement a desired result") and the ultimate rules, which it says "are well beyond the Department's regulatory authority under the Higher Education Act and, in some cases, the Constitution."

Lawsuits against the Education Department's higher education policies are uncommon, but an advocacy group for men's sports sued in 2007 to challenge the agency's rules on sex discrimination in college athletics, and some college and accrediting officials [quietly contemplated a challenge](#) (similar to APSCU's) to the Bush administration's aggressive attempts to issue regulations governing student learning outcomes in 2007.

Ultimately, they did not have to go that route, as Congress stepped in to [effectively block](#) then-Education Secretary Margaret Spellings from issuing rules.

The lawsuit filed by the career college group could complicate its own efforts to get Congress to rein in the Education Department's rule making, as lawmakers are sometimes reluctant to get involved in disputes that are caught up in the courts.

— [Doug Lederman](#)

# What Degrees Should Mean

January 25, 2011

What should a college graduate know and be able to do? There are as many views on that as there are colleges (thousands), if not individual professors and students (many more).

The diversity of opinions about what a college education means has long been seen as a strength of American higher education. But in recent years, many employers and policy makers have argued that the lack of a common definition of what students should know and be able to do -- and a dearth of adequate methods of gauging whether they know it and can do it -- has contributed to a decline in the quality of higher education and to the awarding of more degrees, but of lesser value.

The push to set such standards at a national (and even federal) level has, in turn, led many college and faculty leaders to complain that a one-size-fits-all approach to defining student learning would result in greatly oversimplified definitions of learning.

To try to provide a shared understanding of what degrees mean -- but *without*, its designers insist, turning that into a government or other mandate -- the Lumina Foundation for Education is today releasing a draft of its Degree Qualifications Profile, created by four leading higher education researchers and policy experts (more on them later).

The profile, around which Lumina officials plan to begin a several-year discussion in which colleges, accreditors and other groups will test and refine it, is intended to establish, in more specific ways than has historically been the case, what the recipients of associate, bachelor's and master's degrees (regardless of discipline) should know and be able to do.

"There is no generally accepted understanding of what quality represents in American higher education," says Jamie P. Merisotis, Lumina's president and chief executive officer. "Our view is that the absence of that shared understanding of what quality means has resulted in employers being dissatisfied with what higher education produces; policy makers being unsure of their investment; and students and families having a lack of clarity about choice of institutions and the relative value of their degrees."

The degree framework, he says, is designed to help develop that shared understanding across majors, programs and institutions. Paired with the foundation's other major student learning project, known as "tuning" -- which focuses on what degree holders should know *within* specific disciplines -- the qualifications profile could help create a common definition of what a college credential should represent, he said, so that better tools (portfolios, projects, and tests) can be developed to measure how well students are actually accumulating the requisite knowledge and skills.

Lumina officials describe the qualifications profile -- loosely modeled on the degree frameworks that the European Union and other countries have adopted -- as potentially "transformational" for American higher education, but they acknowledge that a great deal would need to happen for it to have anywhere near that effect. Several outside experts that *Inside Higher Ed* asked to assess the standards saw significant hurdles to its adoption by colleges -- especially overcoming the

faculty skepticism about any effort that seems to be dropped from on high and that can be seen as substituting national standards for institutionally based ones.

"A learning framework that really promotes student success has to be developed at the local level and has to be led by front-line faculty and staff," Larry Gold, higher education director for the American Federation of Teachers, said via e-mail. "Nothing is less likely to help students succeed than an overly standardized curriculum and assessment regime imposed from the outside. So the Degree Profile can make a contribution if the efforts coming out of it are developed and driven by front-line faculty and staff at the institution *and* if these efforts receive the kind of continuing support that makes them sustainable -- particularly investment in the faculty and staff charged with making the program succeed."

## The Genesis

Lumina first began floating the idea of developing a qualifications framework about 18 months ago, in a series of behind-the-scenes meetings with higher education leaders and policy makers. Foundation officials portrayed a commonly agreed-upon understanding of what a college degree means as an important tool to knocking down some of the barriers that inhibit college completion, which has been at the center of Lumina's agenda for the last several years. Those barriers include the difficulty of transferring academic credit from one institution to another, and the failure to recognize the value of learning that takes place outside traditional classroom settings, which often goes unrecognized in a system in which the "credit hour" is the coin of the realm.

But Lumina's leaders also saw the profile as key to ensuring that not only are more degrees awarded, "but that those must be of high quality," said Holiday Hart McKiernan, senior vice president and general counsel at Lumina.

The foundation assembled four longtime experts on assessment and student learning -- Clifford Adelman of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, Peter Ewell of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Paul Gaston of Kent State University, and Carol Geary Schneider of the American Association of Colleges & Universities -- to "reduce to writing, without worrying about implementation, what would be the core competencies" for recipients of various degrees. The four researchers spent months poring over the comments of outside reviewers and, not surprisingly to those who know the four of them, debating intensely among themselves.

Their final product divides the desired skills and knowledge into five basic areas -- specialized knowledge; broad, integrative knowledge; intellectual skills; applied learning; and civic learning -- and lists within each the key learning outcomes in which a student should be competent, with the expectations for students increasing as they move up the three degree levels. For specialized knowledge -- knowledge acquired in a specialized field of study, for instance -- the profile lists the following outcomes at different levels:

The associate degree holder:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describes the scope and principal features of the field of study, citing core theories and practices, and offers a similar explication of a related field.</li><li>• Illustrates the field's current terminology.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates substantially error-free products, exhibits, or performances in the field.</li> </ul>
The bachelor's degree holder:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defines and explains the boundaries, divisions, styles and practices of the field.</li> <li>Defines and properly uses the principal terms in the field, both historical and contemporaneous.</li> <li>Demonstrates fluency in the use of tools, technologies and methods in the field.</li> <li>Evaluates, clarifies and frames a complex question or challenge using perspectives and scholarship from the student's major field and at least one other.</li> <li>Constructs a project related to a familiar but complex problem in the field of study by assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs or techniques.</li> <li>Constructs a summative project, paper or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the field.</li> </ul>
The master's degree holder:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elucidates the major theories, research methods and approaches to inquiry, and/or schools of practice in the field; articulates relevant sources; and illustrates their relationship to allied fields.</li> <li>Assesses the contributions of major figures and organizations in the field; describes its major methodologies and practices; and implements at least two such methodologies and practices through projects, papers, exhibits or performances.</li> <li>Articulates major challenges involved in practicing the field, elucidates its leading edges, and delineates its current limits with respect to theory, knowledge and practice.</li> <li>Initiates, assembles, arranges and reformulates ideas, concepts, designs and techniques in carrying out a project directed at a challenge in the field beyond conventional boundaries.</li> </ul>

Lumina officials and the authors say they went out of their way to fill the degree profile with "concrete, illustrative student learning outcome statements" that use "active verbs that tell all parties -- students, faculty, employers, policymakers and the general public -- what students actually should do to demonstrate their mastery."

That may be true compared to other documents of its kind, but even some of the outside reviewers -- many of whom were higher education researchers -- described the profile as "abstract." Lumina officials admit that the document is complex, and that the full impact of the degree profile won't be felt unless and until college leaders and their faculties begin discussing whether and how the qualifications laid out in the profile apply to their own students, and how they might go about documenting that the students to whom they award degrees have accumulated the knowledge and skills in question.

Most of the outside experts with whom *Inside Higher Ed* shared the degree profile said they found little to argue with in the qualifications and outcomes put forward by the four authors.

"This is a very good document that shows where higher education should end up," said Michael Poliakoff, policy director at the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. "It is very strong in stressing the fact that this needs to be an institutionwide conversation, and ensures that there is thorough integration of these learning elements" across academic programs.

But like others interviewed, Poliakoff stressed that without a clear sense of how (and whether) it can be implemented on campuses, the profile will make little difference. "Without getting it down to the level of requirements and assessment, it will fall short of its full impact," he said.

Richard Arum, whose new book, *Academically Adrift*, gives observers of higher education new ammunition with which to question how much learning is taking place on campuses, said that he and his co-author, Josipa Roksa, were impressed on first review of the Lumina document. "It draws attention to what students know, rather than to the general 'let's count course credits and assume they've gotten something out of it' approach to students," he said. "If colleges and universities did this, it would shift things in a positive way."

Arum described himself as "skeptical," however, about "where the incentives are to get the colleges and universities to do this, to decide 'this is a useful framework to us.'"

Like Gold of the AFT, Arum argued that "the only way [that higher education can successfully] focus on improving student learning is with the faculty at the center of it," but added that "learning has been pushed to the periphery of higher education, just the way faculty have been pushed to the margins."

If the degree profile provides a "common vocabulary about what students can do" around which trustees, administrators and instructors can ultimately have a discussion about what they want students on their individual campuses to know and be able to do, it could have the sort of "transformative impact" that Lumina envisions, Arum said. "You could imagine trustees or regents, using this framework or something like it, saying to administrators, 'What are you doing to ensure that our students can do these things? Show me the plan you have for making sure they do, and show me the evidence that you're accomplishing this.' If that leads campuses to use what's out there and identify better ways to measure higher-order skills, this could be a useful tool."

### The Lumina Strategy

Lumina officials, who have in the past been accused of pushing initiatives on colleges (and especially the foot-draggers on campuses) rather than collaborating with them, say they know that the degree qualifications profile project will work only if institutions (and their faculties) buy in. "We do not think this is something that should be imposed on [faculty members], ... but they do bear the brunt of failure if [higher education] does not deliver on defining quality," said Merisotis. "We had a really good faculty-level conversation about this, and we think we have a good plan for involving them. Are we expecting universal harmony about this? Heck no. But I think we'll be very transparent about what it is, and help people digest it."

The foundation plans to enlist several groups to help it test and refine the degree profile, including, to start, two accrediting agencies (the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' senior college commission and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools) and the Council of Independent Colleges.

Ralph Wolff, executive director of the Western accreditor, said in an interview Monday that the association had created a panel that will decide whether and how the agency might incorporate the qualifications profile into its standard aimed at ensuring that institutions have clearly defined graduation requirements and levels of achievement for degrees. "Whether it becomes just a suggested framework or is actually incorporated into the standards is very premature," Wolff said.

"For some people, this could raise a series of concerns about homogenizing curriculums and setting outcomes for institutions, and all those issues will be fair game in our discussions," Wolff said. "But the authors seem to have struck a balance between writing [the learning outcomes] with enough specificity and clarity that they have meaning, yet enough diversity and flexibility so that different institutions can adapt it to fit their kind of education. We see the idea having enough potential to explore further."

Richard Ekman, president of the Council of Independent Colleges, said he and his group have come around after some early skepticism about the Lumina project, which he said he found "really unappealing" from early discussions with Lumina. In those planning meetings, he said, Lumina officials described the project as designed to "ensure comparability" of American degrees with those in the European Union (which has embraced its own qualifications framework through the Bologna accords). And Lumina was also, he said, "talking about working hand in hand with the [Obama] administration," foreboding the kind of federal involvement in curricular and other matters that private colleges like Ekman's members tend to loathe.

But Lumina's language has changed, Ekman said. "They're now talking about these frameworks as a way of working toward higher quality across a variety of American colleges and universities in a voluntary way, and contributing toward this ubiquitous discussion without putting it in the context of standards that are in the control of the government. This is now a concept that I believe is worth our exploring."

Ekman said that teams of presidents, faculty leaders and assessment experts from roughly 25 campuses will work on the CIC project, with the ultimate goal of "finding language that might work for a broad group of our institutions." That could be a challenge, he acknowledged, because the group's members include small institutions that do nothing but liberal arts and other institutions with more professional orientations.

"I think the general categories are fine, but the test will be making them fit what colleges actually do," Ekman said. "I made it clear I wasn't buying into it 100 percent, but that I did think it was concept worth exploring. I'm pleased that Lumina is willing to take a flyer on us."

Is Commonality the Goal?

In releasing the profile, Merisotis and others at Lumina have emphasized that one of its goals is in creating a "shared understanding of what a degree represents in terms of learning," as he put it. But how common must a common framework be to be valuable?

Perhaps the biggest tension in the last few years' debates over higher education accountability has been the pressure on the part of some policy makers to insist on outcomes and measures that are comparable across programs and institutions, on the theory that to make decisions among



colleges, consumers need the same information from all of them. But that, critics argue, leads to reductionism that helps no one.

Adelman, the former Education Department researcher who is among the profile's authors, says he envisions colleges engaging in an "iterative process" that leaves lots of room for individual institutions, or groups of them, to go their own way in crafting degree profiles that work for them.

Imagine the degree profile, he says, as the outline of Alfred Hitchcock that came to be an iconic representation of the filmmaker. Then imagine provosts, deans and professors at a lot of individual colleges, or associations of them, discussing which learning outcomes in the profile work for them just as-is, which they'd jettison, a few they'd add.

"College X's portrait might look like a Gauguin, another's might be a Dürer," he said. "Three years from now, you might find 24 different versions, but they'd have the same reference point. They'd have the same form, and be based on the same palette -- the Hitchcock outline."

That result isn't neat and clean, perhaps, but it stands independently of government, and "it's a heck of a lot better than what we have now," Adelman said -- a situation in which politicians perceive colleges to pay too little attention to learning and constantly threaten to wade in and fix the problem.

And they will, Adelman warned, if colleges (and accreditors, whom he sees playing a key role) don't confront their perceived failings themselves. That may be difficult, he acknowledged, but the Lumina project offers a pathway toward doing so. "If higher education runs away from this challenge, it will lose all its claims to sanctity" on questions of student learning.

— Doug Lederman

# **El Camino College observatory to hold open house**

## **The Daily Breeze**

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 01/25/2011

Anyone interested in doing a little star gazing might want to make plans to visit the El Camino College Observatory Wednesday night. The observatory is holding a free open house from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., where visitors and students can look through telescopes that are set up to view the moon, Jupiter, double stars and star clusters.

The observatory is on the roof of the El Camino College Math Building. Visitors are asked to climb the stairs on the northeast corner of the building. In the event of fog, the event will be postponed.

# Bill would cut down on financial-aid paperwork

**Torrance Daily Breeze**

Jan. 25, 2011

When fees are going up, up, up, it must be hard to view them as a bargain. Such is the case with the fees paid by California community college students for the courses taught at our first line of collegiate defense.

But the fact is, even as the fees for tuition at community colleges look to be going up from \$26 per unit to \$36 per unit — a crazy-making 38 percent, and it may go more than that — community college education in California is still an incredible bargain.

We not only have the best two-year and adult education system in the country; we also have the cheapest. So in the middle of the need for painful budget cuts, especially to education, the best investment the state could make in its citizens, community colleges are still a good deal.

Take a look at what out-of-state, and the many foreign students at our community colleges, are paying for the same classes our children and ourselves are taking: \$180 more per unit than California residents do.

Why do they still flock here, then? Because they know that even at that price, a college education is still a relative bargain.

Because it has been so cheap, many students and their parents haven't in the past bothered to look into the financial aid programs they would certainly seek at the California State University and the University of California level.

Now, though, many more students will be looking for financial aid, and they should.

A bill being reintroduced in Sacramento by Assemblyman Anthony Portantino, D-La Canada Flintridge, as AB 91, looks to be a help in that process. Portantino's bill, similar to one that he got passed before it was unaccountably vetoed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, would help to make sure that families don't leave aid dollars on the table owing to the forms and documents required to obtain it being so complex and hard to fill out.

The bill seeks to deal with a simple problem: Allowing families to apply for aid by filling out one form instead of two.

The bill would establish a three-year pilot program at 10 community college campuses where the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) would be used as the primary application for financial aid. Students currently apply for either a fee waiver known as BOG, or the FAFSA, or both. But if they don't file the FAFSA form, they miss out on Cal Grants and Pell Grants, scholarships, student loans and work-study options. Portantino says that studies indicate only about a third of eligible students apply for federal aid.

The campuses in the pilot program would be selected by Chancellor Jack Scott's office, which would report the results after three years and make recommendations for a statewide expansion of the program.

We think it's a good bill that would aid many California families, and urge the Legislature to once again pass it and the new governor to sign it.

Read more at the San Francisco Examiner:

<http://www.sfexaminer.com/news/california/2011/01/analysis-recent-california-newspaper-editorials#ixzz1CFgdMBUN>

## Capitol Journal: Chipping away at community colleges LA Times

**As fees rise and courses are cut, students suffer. Without a tax extension, the losses could be much greater.**

By George Skelton Capitol Journal

*January 31, 2011*

From Sacramento

California's community colleges always have been among the best bargains in America. But too often these days that's like saying land's cheap on Mars.

Price doesn't matter much if the product isn't available.

Like a lot of institutions that rely on tax dollars, California's community college system has been hit hard. And that means students suffer.

They're getting less for more.

Gov. Jerry Brown is proposing to increase student fees by \$10 per unit, from \$26 to \$36. That would raise \$110 million to partly offset a \$400-million state funding cut Brown advocates for community colleges, leaving them with \$3.6 billion in state money, a 10% trim.

The governor essentially wants to shift that \$400 million to K-12 schools. They're more popular with the public, and their biggest union — the California Teachers Assn. — is arguably the most powerful lobby in Sacramento.

Brown's political strategy is simple: He's protecting K-12 schools from more whacks for now. But he's warning that K-12 cuts will resume if voters don't approve his proposed extension of temporary tax hikes in June. The teachers union presumably will be highly motivated to help bankroll his ballot campaign if the Legislature allows the special election.

The community colleges aren't complaining loudly about the proposed fee increase. "It may be a little sharp, but it doesn't hurt too badly," says Jack Scott, chancellor of the California Community Colleges.

The higher fees still would be the lowest in the nation, by far, totaling \$1,080 annually for a student on track for a two-year associate of arts degree. Moreover, the fees are waived for students judged to be financially needy, about half the enrollment.

Neither are the colleges really screaming — grumbling maybe — about their virtually certain funding cut. It's tough all over. For years, the state has been in a deep hole, the latest calculation being \$25 billion. It must climb out and everyone has to give. The colleges get that.

But they're lobbying for restoration of some of the severed funding if Brown's tax plan passes.

It's the cumulative effect of several years of slashing that has taken its toll. "We've been cut and cut and cut," Scott says. "It's been death by many cuts."

By law, the 112 colleges must admit anyone who is at least 18 and has a high school diploma. But that doesn't mean the student is guaranteed a desired class.

The colleges have been paring instructors, filling classrooms to the brim and canceling courses.

"You can't make major cuts without reducing staff," Scott says. "You can't save much money by not sweeping the floor as often."

The colleges turned away 140,000 students during the last school year. It's estimated twice that many are being shut out of classes this year. Brown's funding cuts would deny courses for 350,000 more, according to longtime community colleges lobbyist Patrick McCallum.

Many college classes have long waiting lists, virtually unheard of 20 years ago. Some examples from last fall: 6,200 wait-listed seats at Cypress College, nearly 13,000 at Bakersfield College, 80,000 in the Los Rios Community College District in Sacramento County.

"The big story is the number of first-time students — the recent high school graduates — who are being squeezed out," says Paul Steenhausen, community college expert for the Legislative Analyst's Office. "I liken it to an unfortunate game of musical chairs where there's not enough chairs for participants and when the music stops, it's the new guy every time who winds up without a seat."

Aggravating this student deprivation, the number of counselors has been halved. It's the counselor who's supposed to guide a student through the complex maze of academia, advising which courses to take to, for example, earn a degree in two years and transfer to either of the state university systems.

Fewer classes, fewer counselors — it's becoming much tougher to obtain a degree in two years, even for the most ambitious.

"When I go on a campus and refer to it as a 'two-year college,' " Steenhausen says, "students snicker."

My most reliable source on all this is my granddaughter, Georgia Henry, 19, who's on target to graduate in June from Sacramento City College after running a two-year obstacle course. Like many students, she opted for a local community college to save money and build up her grades to gain admission to the University of California.

She says students at Sac City are basically on their own.

"You have to be smart about what class you take and double-check everything because there's nobody making sure you're on the right track," she says. "That's a little bit different than I thought it would be."

"I kind of found my way through by making all the mistakes possible and deciding I had to fix it, and I did."

That included taking practically a full load last summer.

"I only got into all my classes because I learned my way around the system."

In all, there are 2.76 million California community college students. Besides university transfer aspirants, they include returning war vets and laid-off workers seeking retraining and single welfare moms learning job skills.

College leaders worry about the fate of Brown's proposed tax extension.

"If it passes, we can quickly breathe a sigh of relief," says Daniel LaVista, chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District. "If it fails, Armageddon looks us in the eye.

"I'm not one who rises to melodrama, but I can tell you this would be a different organization."

Community colleges have always been the bedrock of quality public education in California, an indispensable building block of economic growth. But that bedrock has been eroding.

## Dan Walters: Permanent cuts build new California budget hurdle

By Dan Walters

Published: Sunday, Jan. 30, 2011 - 12:00 am | Page 3A

Gov. Jerry Brown summoned reporters to his office last Wednesday to talk about his state budget.

As he bantered with newsies around a conference table – a picnic table on steroids – advocates for the aged, disabled and poor were denouncing his billions of dollars in cuts to the state's relatively generous "safety net" services.

"Not only are these cuts a death sentence to the sickest and most vulnerable of our communities, it's also going to cost the state of California more money," Lisa Roellig, a hepatitis patient at an Oakland clinic, told one hearing. It was a sentiment repeated dozens of times last week – safety net cuts are not only morally repugnant and pound-foolish, but life-threatening.

One journalist asked Brown about that contention. He not only defended the cuts as "necessary because we just don't have the money," but made it clear that they are a big part of a permanent "retrenchment" in spending.

"They're a retrenchment in what California was attempting to do in recent years," he said, adding, "they look permanent to me" because "the money isn't there."

If Brown is serious about "retrenchment," it alters political dynamics. Budget stakeholders have been grudgingly willing to accept cuts in the past only because they were seen as temporary and would be reversed when revenue picked up.

As recipients and their advocates ponder permanent reductions in welfare grants, in-home care, adult day care, health care, child care and other safety-net programs, resistance is mounting, as last week's hearings indicated. It calls into question an assumption of budget politics.

It's been assumed that the Legislature's Democrats would back Brown because he also wants a five-year extension of now-expiring temporary taxes and other revenue measures to raise about \$11 billion a year. Republican reluctance to place taxes on the ballot, it appeared, would be the major hurdle.

Republicans are still reluctant, but the permanency of the safety net cuts Brown wants, even if the additional taxes are enacted, is building another hurdle among Democrats.

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg has pledged to meet Brown's spending cut mark, but there's evident opposition in the Assembly, whose leaders come from Los Angeles, where political culture is rooted in unionized social services delivery.



Half of the state's in-home supportive services recipients, tended by unionized workers, are in Los Angeles County, for example. That hits Speaker John A. Pérez and other Assembly leaders where they live.

"When we unwind what has been done (in the past)," Brown said, "it's very difficult," noting the outpouring of opposition. But if it's not done and the tax extensions aren't approved, he adds, the alternative is "so horrible that we don't want to release it."