

TO: CBC Committee Members
FR: Concerned Faculty, Skyline College
RE: Proposed Budget Cuts at Skyline
November 13, 2009

I am responding to the committee because there is not enough time in our meetings for me address the issues as presented by the “Concerned Faculty, Skyline College”.

First, let me say that we (CBC) are all “Concerned Faculty”. The current and future budget projections have placed everyone in difficult positions. With human nature being what it is, we are all in a protection mode.

The following paragraphs in red are quotes from the original letter or the most recent issue of the Advocate.

“The current administration strategy of reducing the number of students undermines the mission of the San Mateo community colleges. Our community has voted to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on building construction and renovation. But today classrooms are standing empty and silent, while more and more students are turned away.”

Consider the fact that FTES is responsible for approximately 90% of our operating income. Obviously, we are all here for one reason and that is to teach students. Take a look the November issue of the Advocate, on Page 6 our President says, “State won’t fund additional students”.

“However, we have not seen any cuts in college administration, and in fact, administrators in the district received a 20% increase in their salary schedule in 2007-2008 while faculty did not even receive a cost-of-living increase last year.”

This is unfair to use this example. We signed our last contract based on the data provided by our union. We are the ones who took a gamble that a cost-of-living increase would be there when the time arrived. We were wrong, not the district. We have not been asked to roll back salaries. Why should the administration if all is fair and equal? Ask any CSU professor who lost 10% of their salary as a result of 18 furloughed days.

“Instead, we propose that the high-end proposal of \$410,000 in administrative savings be adopted. These savings can be accomplished by cutting back on administrative positions and/or rolling back the administrators’ 2007 salary increase.”

Ernie Rodriquez stated in the Advocate that we should “Eliminate Department Dean Positions”.

Think of this way, do you have the time to spend helping the governor and his staff run the state if we eliminate all other elected official positions?

Keep-in-mind, the elimination of administrative positions will fall back into the laps of faculty. If Department Dean positions are eliminated the backlash will be wide spread. The increased workload for faculty will be huge. Who will do the work? Who will provide the leadership

necessary to run the college? Most of us are busy prepping for classes, teaching our classes, attending meetings, and serving on committees. Someone has to lead or chaos will reign!

While “shared governance” has been seen by many as a positive, it has also diverted our attention away from what we do best, and that is to teach our students.

Some administrators will have bumping rights and some faculty will be out of a job; so what are we really accomplishing here? We are setting up a scenario of them against us. This is not good for anyone and creates a very difficult working environment.

“Have VPIs with two full-time, high level administrative assistants handle Division Dean duties.”

To make this statement creates an assumption that our current administrators don’t have much to do because they aren’t in the classroom. The workload of the current administrators will have to be done by someone; so we hire two high level administrative assistants? This defies reasonable logic.

It is interesting to hear comments about how well our college is managed when we were doing well and then to read comments and suggestions as I have quoted. If it wasn’t for the effective administration we have, the college would be looking at much deeper cuts. Take a look around the state and look closely at those districts that don’t make it through this crisis. Lack of foresight and sufficient planning will be their downfall.

“Notwithstanding the fact that the root cause of our crisis is at the state level, our mission to serve students is local.”

This is not a local issue as long as this district receives a high percentage of its revenues from the state. If we become a “Basic Aid” district then it becomes a local issue!

During my twenty-five year tenure at Skyline College I have learned a few things. The students we teach require services. These services are provided by the administration, faculty, admissions and records, counseling, custodial (this is another entire subject of its own), security, etc. We can’t expect students to show up for classes and then not provide them what they are due!

It interesting to see what is taking place here. Remember what has been said here the next time our legislators in Sacramento are gridlocked. We are doing the identical thing they do by not addressing the reality of the situation. This state and district no longer have the revenues to do business as usual. The credit cards must be destroyed and the budget balanced, it is no simpler than that. It will be painful and we will get through this, but at what price?

Sincerely,

Rick Escalambre

CBC Committee and a Concerned Faculty Member of Skyline College