

SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
GOVERNING BOARD

UNADOPTED MINUTES

Special Meeting  
January 15, 2009

**APPENDIX A**

5. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Board President Young recognized CTA President Tom Grube, who requested to comment on the budget and state of the family.

Mr. Grube began by saying, "The most recent budget that the District has provided shows the District ending this academic year with a 9.7% reserve, well above the 5% that the state recommends. This would be reduced to 7.3% if they honor the salary offer that they made to us and then down to 6.7% when they pay for Tom Henry.

For the 2007-08 academic year, the District received a 4.53% COLA. The purpose of a COLA is to help the District and its employees cope with increased costs. As has always been the case, the District did not simply pass our share of this additional money, about \$1 million for each year on to us. Now they are claiming that they don't have the money to give us, for last year or this year. There are other possible large expenses coming that aren't accounted for in the budget. More precisely, they are saying they aren't sure if they have to money to give us.

Where did the money go? The District paid a consultant to come in and help manipulate the books to show that they were not illegally underpaying us. Hundreds or thousands are going to a San Diego law firm allegedly paid to assist with negotiations, but actually engaging in and encouraging actions to drag out negotiations, while they rack up more billable hours. We're currently paying for two Superintendents as the last one was allowed to accrue so much vacation time that he receives a payout of about four months salary after he leaves. If some trustees had their way, we'd be paying for three Superintendents this month. We've paid a consulting firm to assist with the Superintendent search. They can't find any qualified candidates willing to work with this Governing Board at a college where accreditation is at risk and contracts remain unsigned.

Despite plenty of evidence provided by the Union and others that the Budget Office was a mess and not providing accurate numbers, the Board and Administration did not act in a manner necessary to correct this problem in a timely fashion. Another consultant was hired from Utah, allegedly to work on Banner, but actually to help do the work of the Fiscal Services Director. Now we are paying the Fiscal Services Officer to stay at home and not do her job rather than coming in here and doing it poorly. We paid thousands of dollars to have Tom Henry come in and tell us the Fiscal Services office was a mess. Tonight, the Governing Board will hire Tom Henry at \$200/hour for 2-3 days a week for an estimated 18 months--that's \$312,000 to help straighten out the books and teach the Governing Board how to behave.

Saving our accreditation absolutely must be priority number one. Now we're supposed to have one big group hug and work together toward saving the accreditation of this institution. The Governing Board and the Administration need to help bring back that warm fuzzy family feeling to help get us on track.

The Association has agreed to do its part by settling for only two-thirds of its share of the 2007-08 COLA the District received from the state. The District could honor that commitment. If they truly can not afford to give us back our money that they've squandered elsewhere they could: apologize for the bad behavior and bad decisions that have brought us to the point where we'll remain among the lowest paid faculty in the state and our accreditation is at risk, look at where money was misspent and pledge to stop some wasteful practices; look for creative ways to make up for the fact that they misspent our money and now must spend more for their Tom Henry rehab, such as asking us what contract language we might want to see changed at little or no cost to the District; guarantee us that they will give us back our money that we gave them in the form of an involuntary loan by giving us raises of COLA plus for the next several years, stop trying to save money by taking away health care from the District's employees and their families when there are plenty of other places that costs can be contained; stop the practice of dragging out bargaining as a strategy to wear us down, and stop engaging in strategies that try to 'win' at the bargaining table by pitting employee groups against each other.

Accreditation must be priority number one. That doesn't mean that the faculty should roll over and let the need for us to 'play nice', 'be part of the family', and 'work together as a team', allow this Governing Board, this Administration, and this Law Firm to walk all over us and steal our lunch money without even getting a 'we're sorry, it won't happen again and we will make it up to you'. Each and every one of you is needed to help save our jobs and our health care for our families and save the accreditation of this institution for our students and the citizens of Solano County."

Board President Young thanked Mr. Grube for his comments.

Board President Young recognized Instructor Danielle Widemann, Geography/Geology Instructor, who requested to speak on accreditation.

Ms. Widemann, a born and raised Solano County resident, gave examples of people's lives that have been changed as a result of coming to Solano Community College. Ms. Widemann asked the Board to remember how important an institution Solano College is to the community and reconsider their actions relative to micromanagement, lack of fiscal responsibility, and their role in accreditation, and to remember it is beyond how it affects them as Board members, but more importantly how their actions affect the citizens of Solano County. Ms. Widemann asked the Board to own up to the problems that have been their's and move on to a place where Solano College can be the beautiful life it once was.

Board President Young thanked Ms. Widemann for her comments.

Board President Young recognized Instructor Terri Pearson-Bloom, representing CTA, who requested to comment about spending money.

Ms. Pearson-Bloom stated that faculty and staff were on campus today participating in Flex Cal activities and appreciated Trustee Claffey's attendance and Board President Young's participation later in the day, listening and interacting with faculty and staff as they talked about the future of the College. Academic Senate President Lamb asked those present during his presentation to stand up and show support of Dr. Lisa Waits being retained as Interim Superintendent/President, of which 90-95% stood with resounding

applause and a standing ovation, making it 100% clear that faculty do not want a change in leadership at this time. President Waits is gracious and will step down if she thinks it will help the College, but it is wrong that she be asked to do that. Faculty will not stand for another dollar being spent on another interim person at the expense of their raises. We are in a budget crisis, and you can't say that in one breath and then hire another person that we don't need when we have a perfectly good leader that faculty and staff are unitedly behind. Let Dr. Waits finish what she has started, and utilize Mr. Henry to help the College. It is not fair for Dr. Waits to step down on a 4-3 vote that is not united when faculty and staff who give their lives daily to this College are united. Ms. Pearson-Bloom stated, "Please, no changes in leadership at this time."

Board President Young thanked Ms. Pearson-Bloom for her comments.

Board President Young recognized Instructor Marc Lancet from the Art Department, who requested to comment on accreditation.

Mr. Lancet used his family metaphor to discuss the Solano College family and keeping it healthy. Students are thriving at Solano and academics are strong. The Accreditation Report doesn't talk about faculty problems. Mr. Lancet asked the Board to take care of faculty and staff and settle their contracts and move on.

Board President Young thanked Mr. Lancet for his comments.

Board President Young recognized Dr. Jeff Lamb, Academic Senate President, who requested to comment on the approval of the administrative agreement.

Dr. Lamb stated it seems to be a difficult time to be making this kind change after our recent visit from the State Chancellor's Office and our accreditation problems when we are constantly being "dinged" for not keeping our top-level administrators. We are in the middle of a search for a new S/P. We are paying for three S/P's and a special trustee and a CBO who is not on campus. With Dr. Waits in place, this is the first time we have had clear and consistent communication and fiscal numbers heading toward being accurate, which has put us in a place where we can trust our budget. It is a joy to work with someone who is open and honest and has the faculty's confidence. To say good-bye to this is difficult. Any benefit a more experienced outside interim has must be weighed against the momentum of our moving forward. Dr. Lamb concluded by saying, "While this decision might be a done deal, it is not a decision we (faculty) are happy about."

Board President Young thanked Dr. Lamb for his comments.