What's Really Behind the SSTF Recommendations?

Greg Perkins, EOPS

Who can argue with the ideas of a “Student Success Task Force”? Many of our students can. Despite several well-intentioned proposals to enhance the matriculation services for the general population of students and despite recommendations to allow the greatest access to classes and services to those students who make the effort to find and pursue a well-defined educational/career goal, the true movement behind the SSTF recommendations and the associated legislative proposals is to impose a business model on our educational programs. It is also a movement to downsize the community college system in California at a time when it is needed more than ever as the best hope for spurring an economic renaissance in our state and for lifting us toward achieving the 2020 college graduate goals.

Our students recognize these recommendations as part of the trend toward downsizing their opportunities by increasing their share of the costs for education while eliminating programs and reducing classes. They can see the absence of courage and vision on the part of elected officials in Sacramento who lack the will to raise taxes and revenues to maintain the master plan for higher education in California that promised to be these students’ ticket to the American Dream. They see these same politicians, who by and large are graduates of the UC, CSU and community college systems, along with many shortsighted California taxpayers, who got their higher education for next to nothing in the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s, telling the new generation, “you must carry the burden of your own education.” They can see the irony of the SSTF recommendations’ façade of promoting student success as clearly as the hypocrisy of the “I got mine, but you have to pay for yours” attitude of such politicians.

What do the recommendations propose that is so disturbing? They just say that every student should be expected to

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The Guild representative to the Budget Committee is an appointed position that is made by the Guild Executive. Along with this responsibility the appointee is also a member of the Guild Executive and the Guild Negotiation Team. Furthermore, this representative takes part in projects assigned by the Guild Executive Chief Negotiator and reports to the Guild President. The position provides 20% released time to take part in all of the meetings and projects.

The Budget Committee meets twice a month: 2nd Thursday and 4th Tuesday 12 months of each year from 12:10 p.m. -1:30 p.m.

The Budget Committee is chaired by Ron Nakasone in his capacity as Executive Vice President of Administrative Services. The Committee consists of representatives from the different constituent groups on campus: Guild (1), Academic Senate (1), CSEA (2), Administration (3), Students (2). Each of the representatives from these groups participates in the discussion of agenda items and the resulting votes on these items. Also, resource people are assigned to this committee and members of the campus community are always invited to attend and express their views on the agenda items. These individuals are not part of the voting process.

The task of the Budget Committee is to prepare the GCC budget for each academic year. This involves looking at budget items that are not part of the health and benefits line items: these are negotiated at the table with the Guild and CSEA. It is an opportunity for all constituent groups to look at the totality of the needs of GCC in its efforts to meet the educational needs of our students. For the most part, the discussions at the Budget Committee are held with that perspective in mind and are conducted in a collegial manner, even when there are strong differences of opinion.

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Speaking of the Senate...

by Mike Scott, Academic Senate President

New Year, New Semester

It would be great if things were changing for the better. In reviewing what was written last year at this time by the Senate, it appears that things remain mostly the same. We still have some accreditation issues, and the budget is horrible. The only thing different is we now have the dreaded Student Success Task Force recommendations to deal with. The mission of community colleges in California continues to change with each passing month. Where it will ultimately take us, no one knows, but it will be more Basic Skills, CTE and Transfer oriented.

Accreditation—SLOs

Our follow-up report is completed and will be mailed out before March 15. The main concern is our progress in the area of SLOs. We need to be closer to proficiency than we are at the present. Based on information as of the end of February, more work needs to be done. Course-Level SLOs are at 86% complete, Courses with Assessments/Timelines are at 54%. Program-Level PLOs are at 71% complete, and Programs with Assessment/Timelines are at 13%. In order to be considered proficient, we need all four of these areas to be at 100% or very near there. Hopefully, the Institute Day activities by the Divisions will get us there. Assuming the numbers improve and the Accreditation Commission accepts our work as sufficient, we will have until March 15, 2013 to be at the proficient level. If not, we face the potential of being placed on Warning, or at the very least, having a site visit forced on us in October to assess our progress towards proficiency.

Speaking of sanctions, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has been busy. They released their January 2012 list of visits and results. Only four colleges were reaffirmed based on a comprehensive evaluation. The following sanctions were made:

Warning
Columbia College, Fresno City College, Reedley College, Solano College, College of Marin, Evergreen Valley College, San Diego Miramar College.

Probation
Modesto College, Shasta College, Moorpark College, Oxnard College, Ventura College, Northern Marianas College, San Jose City College.

Show Cause (the worst sanction)
College of the Redwoods and Cuesta College.

Probation due to fiscal Condition
Palo Verde College. Apparently, the ACCJC is serious about those who fall below the 5% reserve mandate.

Budget—Program Reductions

With the projected $7.5M-9M budget deficit for academic year 2012-2013, there is a recommendation being floated around that GCC reduce its course offerings by 5.56%. If the decision to make these cuts materializes, we are looking at cutting approximately 95 classes per semester. The decision rests with the Administration. Before any program is cut, they will have to supply data that justifies the program’s cuts. We can’t have an across-the-board methodology as we did the last time this occurred. How these cuts are made, and what method we will use, will be vetted through the governance system starting with Enrollment Management and further vetting at Senate. All program-related items fall under the purview of the Senate and will be taken very seriously.
As your new Chapter 76 President, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for allowing me to serve in this position. My hope is that we will continue to improve communication with each other as well as with other constituencies on campus. Times are tough and we need to be kind toward each other.

As I took over from Saodat (big shoes to fill), I felt it was important for the new Executive Board to set some goals, and so we had a mini-retreat on campus and worked together to come up with ideas about the types of things we can do to help members.

The group work was great and we came up with many ideas which we will begin to implement over the course of the year. With the tough budget situation, other than dealing with the budget crisis, we also need to focus on the great work that members are doing and to provide more opportunities to acknowledge and thank staff. I hope that you will watch your inbox for opportunities where you can nominate yourself or a colleague for recognition.

Many of you have shared your concerns, ideas, frustrations, hopes, and thoughts with me already. I hope all of you will feel comfortable in sharing with me or any of your Executive Cabinet members. Our work, while it may be individual in nature, is part of the larger picture of this campus and we need to keep communication lines open. I believe others have often said what I am trying to say much better, so I will rely on their wisdom and share a favorite quote with you each time. Until next time...

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”
—Nelson Mandela

For an update on the Garfield Campus and a Q & A with Deborah Kinley, Garfield's new Interim Associate Dean of Continuing and Community Education, see "Garfield Gleanings" on page 8.
Welcome to the spring 2012 semester! Everyone who went to the Classified Council Christmas party had a great time, and there were many great raffle prizes! Thanks to all who attend and make it so special.

Classified Council is now selling See’s Easter candy. All proceeds go toward student scholarships. Help us support our many students: buy Easter candy!

We had a great “Play Day” set up with Jean Lecuyer and Jennifer Krestow from the Science Center, and then the power went out! I have saved our Play List and will email you when we have a new date; stay tuned.

Roger Dickes gave us a great look at 3D animation characters in the Bhupesh Parikh Health Sciences building last week, and it was awesome. If you haven’t been up to the first floor of the Health Sciences building to see all of the different animation labs, I suggest you go.

Classified Council plans to present a lecture on the Child Development Program and Center on Thursday, March 29. Mark your calendar now. Also, in April we hope to present another talk about STRESS. We can all use some tips on handling stress; be sure to look for this talk after spring break.

Stay healthy, stay focused, and know that we are all in this together. So, pat yourself on the back for the great job you do!
ADJUNCT JUNCTION
by Phyllis Eckler, Guild 2nd Vice President

Taxing Our Brains

The signature-gathering season for November ballot measures will soon be upon us. Most propositions will require about 800,000 signatures to be eligible for inclusion on the November ballot. However that is only the first step—getting the votes to pass is the final hurdle.

There are currently three different proposals for tax increases that are being shopped around, and the petition you sign could make the difference of how much community colleges will see from any tax increase and how long that revenue stream will last. The first, Governor Brown’s tax initiative, calls for a raise in the taxes of those who earn over $250,000 per year as well as a half-cent sales tax increase for everyone in the state. This proposal would be in effect for five years and is expected to bring in $4 billion the first year and $7 billion in subsequent years. Eleven percent of new revenues, up to $385 million in year one and up to $750 million in other years, would go directly to community colleges, and the rest would go to other levels of the California public education system. This plan, however, would sunset after five years. The California Teachers Association is a supporter of the governor’s plan.

The California Federation of Teachers, in conjunction with the Courage Campaign and California Nurses Association, is sponsoring the second initiative, the Millionaires Tax of 2012, that would tax earnings above and beyond $1 million. The proceeds from this tax increase would be spent on early childhood education through twelfth grade. None of this money would be available for community colleges. This proposal is expected to bring in $11 billion per year. These taxes would end after twelve years.

The third ballot measure, called Our Children, Our Future, that will be out there petitioning for signatures has been brought forward by Molly Munger, a wealthy civil rights activist and lawyer from the Pasadena area. Her plan would increase taxes on all levels of income on a sliding scale. The proceeds from this tax increase would be spent on early childhood education through twelfth grade. None of this money would be available for community colleges. This proposal is expected to bring in about $6 billion per year. This tax proposal has no sunset period.

While all of these propositions could garner enough petition signatures to make it to the November ballot, only one can be the final winner. Meanwhile, with three tax initiatives on the ballot pundits fear that all of them may get turned down because of voter confusion. For a chart comparing the three initiatives, go to http://www.millionairestaxca.com/userfiles/file/pdf/MillionairesTaxComparisonChart_02-07-12.pdf

Knowing which ballot proposal you are signing outside your local grocery store is important. The state budget for community colleges for 2012-13 includes a dangling carrot of revenues provided from one of these possible ballot measures. Although districts are having to plan for the worst (which is expected to be a lot worse than 2011-12), a shining knight could ride in on the back of one of these tax initiatives in the spring of 2013.
on how the agenda items should be resolved.

During the last four years of my tenure on the Budget Committee the focus of the group has been to look at ways to cut the budget instead of expanding the budget due to the financial situation of the state of California. This has not been a process that people on the Budget Committee have looked forward to, but yet they have attempted to look at items of discussion that would make the least negative impact on students and employees at GCC. This goal has not always been reached, depending on the amount of funds that had to be removed from the budget of any given line item.

Members of the Budget Committee and all of us campus-wide have differing views on how to deal with the budget, in both good and bad times. The last four years have been part of the bad budget years for GCC. The Guild representative to the Budget Committee tries to provide the Guild perspective to the discussion, but one needs to keep in mind that the Guild has only one vote in the committee. Hence, I have attempted to put the Guild perspective in a larger context when I question or make an argument on an agenda item in order to gain more support for the position I am advocating.

Some of the agenda items that are discussed at the Budget Committee during the academic year include: the Salary & Benefit Study that was requested by the committee a couple of years ago and will be discussed later this year; time line preparation for the next academic year budget; review of line items to reduce costs to offset loss of revenue to the college; review replacement of faculty, classified and administration positions due to retirements in efforts to save money for the college; use of funds for emergencies such as replacement of broken equipment, power lines, water lines, etc.; requests for augmentation of budget line items from different programs, departments and divisions; impact of 50% law on college based on budget allocations; discussions on the Governmental Accounting Standards Boar (GASB) which deals with GCC’s obligations for retirees in the future; review of different college accounts to see if there can be reductions for savings to the college; impact of costs for having or not having winter and summer sessions to the college; and development of Annual Budget Committee Principles to guide the committee in making its decisions for the academic year.

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Guild News

MORE VALUE FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS KNOW

FAMILY MATTERS

AFT + INSURANCE

Pet Insurance

Your pet can have its own insurance. Policies include older pets, accident-only coverage and more. For as low as $11.95 a month, AFT + pet insurance can protect you against large, unexpected veterinary expenses.

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The new spring semester has brought about a complete changeover in our administrators and chairs. At the end of the fall semester, Deborah Kinley, previously Director of the Career Resource Center, was named Interim Dean, Continuing and Community Education, while Alice Mecom became Chair for the ESL Non-credit Division. Now the Interim Dean and the Acting Dean, Continuing and Community Education, Alfred Ramirez, as well as the chairs for Business and ESL, have all held their positions only since fall 2011.

After the very long winter break, a concerted effort was made to bring Garfield to the community and the community to the Garfield Campus. The brand new Mariposa Building with its large computer labs, extended areas for job placement, and convenient student services and lounges opened in the fall. Yet, surprisingly, enrollment did not substantially increase. It was determined that perhaps the local population just had not heard the word about all the opportunities afforded at Garfield. So an all-out effort was organized by Alfred Ramirez, Deborah Kinley, Jan Young, Alice Mecom, Kathy Seifert and many others to recruit more students to use our brand-new facilities.

Garfield campus should be able to serve many sections of the Glendale community, particularly those living in the southern area near Adams Square: the immigrants, the unemployed, those seeking job training certificates, GED or high school graduation and more. Yet for some reasons, none of which is confirmed to be the cause, enrollment did not increase, and there is still much room in some of the classes. In an effort to make the Garfield Campus more visible to the community, a grand Open House took place Wed. Feb. 21, just six days into the semester. The hoopla was intended to focus attention on all that Garfield can offer to the citizens of Glendale and surrounding areas.

Those staff who worked during winter vacation spent hours canvassing the neighborhood and relevant social centers with flyers about the event. Ads were placed in local papers. Students were given more flyers and encouraged to bring their families, neighbors and distant cousins. With gentle prodding, raffle gifts and refreshments were generously donated by many of the nearby merchants. Parking was arranged, as well as tours of the building and the chance to sit in on many classes. On-site registration was available and encouraged, since many felt the computer system was detrimental rather than instrumental to registration from off campus. The community room and patio housed several tables manned by faculty and staff, each offering information about the various programs, such as Lifelong Learning, ESL, Business, GED programs, and others.

How was it received? If one came down shortly after 10 a.m., when it opened, the place was mobbed. This, however, was break time for our own students, who had been invited to see what else is offered. Although this may not have been the target group, from conversations, it seems that for existing students, this

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open house was very beneficial. Many students signed up for a class in another area. For example, ESL students signed up for computer classes or recently added conversation classes.

Later on, it became much quieter, with just a few people wandering in. So, even if the response was not overwhelming, many new students were recruited. One of those who services the computer lab in the Business section estimated 30 new students were signed up. Others came to listen to a class, and then signed up. The open-ended enrollment, which is part of the noncredit program, permits this process without a deadline when a class has to close.

Perhaps the anticipation was just too much. After all, we are not a new version of an iPhone, just free classes at a time when community college tuition will have practically doubled in one year, and thousands of unemployed people are looking for job training that can actually lead to a job. Should we be satisfied with word-of-mouth communication about “Glendale’s best kept secret”?

To get another viewpoint, and to have our new Interim Associate Dean reflect on the responsibilities of her new position, I invited Deborah Kinley to comment on her new role, her perspective based on ten years’ experience here at Glendale, and her vision for the future of Garfield.

Deborah’s past position, as Director of the Career Resource Center, put her squarely on the border between the educational classes held at Garfield and the larger community, particularly that part with positions of employment. At the same time she was extremely active in developing our colorful, informative, and multi-lingual information brochures that all students receive, most in their native language.

Q: Your position at Garfield as Career Resource Director has always been as a sort of contact person for our students to the working community. How do you think this background will shape or influence your new role as Interim Associate Dean, Continuing and Community Education?

A: Because of my background of helping students I know a lot about our students here at Garfield. I will miss this aspect of my previous position, that is: working directly with the students. However, knowing our students helps me with the decisions I'll make because I am familiar with many of the various circumstances they bring to our school. Not only did I work with students, but I also worked with our faculty with respect to the students, such as students with special needs, where I interacted with their instructor to solve a challenge or issue, and helped coordinate our Continuing to Credit Campus tours of the credit/main campus. Elodia Collins will coordinate the tours from now on. My role now is looking at the big picture of the Garfield Campus and being able to guide and direct faculty and staff in ways that affect all of us here at Garfield. I'm still coming up on the curve, but I have never been busier and happier to interact with everyone as I have so far in my new role. There are little fires to put out and bigger ones, and I'm learning a lot. I feel the past ten years' experience here at Garfield has put me in a good place to understand the needs here and make some positive changes.

Q: You just finished planning and executing with other faculty and staff a grand Open House for the community and our current students to acquaint them with all we have to offer. This resulted in increased enrollment, although there still may be room for more. Are you planning other outreach programs, or will we be concentrating on the student body we have?

A: We are always thinking of ways to reach out to new students, as well as retain the students who are already here. We developed a new flyer which outlines all of our programs and services, we are updating our Welcome Packet.

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GARFIELD Gleanings
state a specific educational goal and follow a well-considered Student Educational Plan from the beginning of their educational careers. They recommend that orientation, assessment and counseling services be enhanced for this general population of students, and that in return these students should be expected to complete their educational plans within the equivalent of three years of full-time attendance. If not, these students should have their BOG fee waivers, hard-earned registration priority, and other important services taken away and given to someone else who knows what to do. Isn’t that reasonable?

Well, it might be for the students who come to our doors with everything figured out, but that is not, for better or for worse, the typical student that we serve. Most of our students come without knowing their specific goal, while many of those who think they know are following wild and poorly researched ideas that they don’t fully understand. The nature of our community college students (vs. the UC and CSU students) is to need ample time for exploration, trial and error, to arrive at their true path to success.

Our students are smart enough to see through that one too. And so should we. Ask our adjunct faculty about the state funding for the parity pay and health benefits and office hours that they were promised. Unfunded mandates galore!

After the token initial funding is withdrawn, the support services wither away, and we are left with nothing but a battery of sanctions that will cause our many honestly peregrinating students to lose their fee waivers, registration and more. We are not allowed to advocate blatantly partisan positions to our students in the classroom, but this is not a matter of partisan politics. This is a battle for the soul of California’s educational master plan. This is a battle for the future of our students and our state. We owe it to our students to empower them to take political action on these issues, just as we must educate them for competitiveness in our state’s developing high-tech and information-based economy. We need to mobilize our students and our community supporters to work for passage of the November 2012 tax initiatives and for legislation that truly enhances our educational mission, rather than diminishes it or makes it the privilege of a select few.

The ASGCC has taken some leadership in attempting to rally students and to lead lobbying efforts in Sacramento, but they need us to teach our students how to identify their elected officials and how to inform themselves about the issues that affect their educational opportunities. We must empower our students to make phone calls, write letters and to educate their parents and neighbors about the consequences of SSTF and any political proposals that threaten educational equity for all of our students. In addition to the ASGCC, a number of GCC’s student organizations, including Spark, EOPS Club, VOICES, Occupy and others, have engaged in letter writing and other legislative advocacy programs.

For more details see resources on FACCC’s website: http://www.faccc.org/Student_Success_Task_Force.html

In EOPS, we have lived by the student support service model of mandatory orientation, counseling and educational planning that underlies the SSTF recommendations for more than forty years, and it has worked very well for our population of non-traditional, educationally and economically disadvantaged students up until now. However, we are now asked to believe that the same elected officials who have cut this program’s funding by over forty percent in the past several years are going to give our colleges the funding to make the same model happen for the general population of basic skills, vocational and transfer students.

Really?
that is given to our current students, and we have prepared infomercials for Gateways to Glendale College, the college's TV program. One of our academic counselors, Mohammad Taghdis, attends a monthly collaborative meeting sponsored by the Employment Development Department. This is a meeting where information is shared by all constituents, so the counselor gives information about our programs and services and then receives information about programs and services in the community. And many of our students are referred to Garfield because of these relationships.

Q: This is not a very pleasant time to be taking over an administrative position. Budget talks are only about cutbacks and lack of funds. What do you see as the biggest challenges to complete during these lean years ahead?

A: I'm a positive thinker, at least I like to believe that, and keeping morale up in these difficult times will be challenging. We still have PeopleSoft concerns, so keeping up with and improving the performance of this powerful program for faculty, staff and students is a big priority. We have great programs here, ESL and our Business divisions, and I'd like to have some input in getting more students.

Q: On the other hand, despite all the cutbacks, we have a brand new, high tech, LEEDS building (not without some technical complications, which have made registration far more complicated than it should have been). How can we best showcase Garfield and all that it can offer the community?

A: We are the best-kept secret in town! I think getting the word out to the community that we offer FREE classes is still our best selling point, and in addition to that, our instructors are very caring and responsive to our students. Our new building is gorgeous, but we still need to get more students. And our transfer rate to the credit campus has increased so that we are the largest feeder, so GCC as a whole needs to recognize us and tout the positives we offer, because all our boats will rise together as we stay afloat. The immediate community knows about us and donated lots of food and gifts for our Open House, so in telling the small businesses about our campus, we got the word out to the community, and the students felt appreciated as well. The bottom line is we must continue to get the word out to the community that we are here and serving the community.

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What's Really Behind the SSTF Recommendations?

As you read these words, many of our students will have participated in lobby days alongside faculty and staff members who are organizing to halt the erosion of our proud and indispensable community college mission: to be the safety net for the underprepared, underrepresented and underserved. The ASGCC will be flying student representatives to Sacramento to advocate for educational access and equity. Other students will ride buses provided by various faculty associations and political advocacy groups to fill Sacramento in early March with voices asking for the same chance to find their educational pathway at their own pace that has restored so many Californians to active participation in our economic well being and to enlightened citizenship. Will we stand with our students to defend these opportunities? I pray that we do.

GARFIELD Gleanings
Matthew Allen, son of Min-Jung Song and Mike Allen, was born at 6 p.m. on Jan. 27, 20 inches long and weighing 4 kilos. Matthew is little brother to Max and Maya Allen, and according to Mike, "quite the complainer."

Roberta Vadman’s daughter, Kara, a sophomore geology major at Colgate University, was selected to travel in March and April on an expedition to Antarctica aboard the Nathaniel B. Palmer research vessel. She will be working with an interdisciplinary team of scientists and students on the LARISSA (LARsen Ice Shelf System, Antarctica) project, which is "studying the catastrophic disintegration of an Antarctic Ice Shelf system as a model and as a predictor of the likely continent-wide changes that Antarctic ice shelves will experience in response to the modern warming trend." Kara will be involved in all shipboard activities including navigation, the recovery of marine sediment core samples, and lab work. The expedition is scheduled to leave March 7 and return April 15.

Do you have any milestones to share with us? Send them to: piper@glendale.edu