



Community Colleges of Ventura County

July 5, 2006

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ELLIOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF OJAI COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PIEDRA BLANCA

Honorable John R. Smiley, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, Ventura County
Hall of Justice, #2120
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Smiley:

The Ventura County Community College District has reviewed the Ventura County 2005/06 Grand Jury Final Report concerning the College District. We largely concur with the Grand Jury's findings and note that they closely approximate those brought to light by an external management audit authorized by our Board. Several errors of fact, emphasis, or interpretation however, are contained in the Grand Jury findings. They are as follows:

Programs and Staffing

F-12 "The shortfall of full-time instructors reduces the ability of students to meet with faculty since part-time instructors are not funded or required to keep office hours."

The word shortfall implies that the current number of full-time faculty members has recently been reduced. This is not the case. VCCCD's ratio of credit hours taught by full-time faculty has been consistent since the early 1980's.

It is true that part-time faculty are neither funded to provide nor required to keep office hours. However, office hours are not the only opportunity for students to meet with faculty. Students consult with faculty during breaks within class sessions, in scheduled appointments, as well as before and after classes. All part-time faculty are invited to establish VCCCD voice mail and email addresses to support their options for making contact with students and vice versa.

F-13 "Some core classes, such as mathematics, English, and social science, are not offered at all three colleges because of faculty shortages and budgetary constraints."

It is true that budget reductions over the past four years impacted the course offerings at all three colleges. However, student access to core classes was not reduced at any of the three colleges.



Core classes are defined as courses, such as English Composition, that fulfill minimum requirements for the associate degree and for university transfer. The sections of mathematics, English, and social science core classes at the three VCCCD colleges have remained the same or increased comparing this academic year to the 2000-2001 academic year (see Table 1). The only exception to this statement is that the sections of mathematics core courses decreased over the past five years in keeping with the decline of about 1,200 students at Oxnard College.

Budget cannot be used to explain the reduction in student access to mathematics classes at Oxnard College because the amount of funding per full-time equivalent student increased at all three colleges over the past five years, and increased most significantly at Oxnard College.

Bond Measure S Projects

F-21 "This information did not mention facilities for competitive athletics."

While the word "competitive" does not appear in the Measure S language, intercollegiate sports (competitive athletics) is a recognized aspect of physical education at the college level. It should not be inferred that the absence of such wording is meant to mislead the electorate.

F-22 "Measure S was placed on the ballot without a Facilities Master Plan prioritizing or directing use of bond funds."

The revision of the individual campus facility master plans to accommodate the Measure S projects is an expensive endeavor. It would have been a questionable expense to the District had the bond measure failed, especially in a time of fiscal exigency. The subsequent passing of Measure S provided funds and the reason to revise such plans and commence work to respond to CEQA.

F-28 "Construction costs for the projects have more than doubled since Measure S was passed."

There has been a significant increase in costs within the building industry since the passage of the bond; perhaps a more accurate assessment of this increase would fall around thirty to thirty five percent.

Conclusions

C-01 "The VCCCD establishes a budget for the year, but often has to readjust it each semester based on student enrollment-generated revenue. Classes may be adjusted or cancelled due to these budget changes." (F-01 thru F-08)

The budget for the Ventura County Community College District (not including Measure S) is approximately \$200 million. An organization of our size does make changes throughout the year, moving budgeted revenue from one category to another. Student enrollment-driven revenue, however, does not affect the year in which an enrollment decline occurs. It is the subsequent year that is impacted, and can be budgeted for. Several years ago the district did budget for anticipated student enrollment growth revenue, and if that growth did not fully materialize, the current year budget was impacted. The District no longer follows that practice and only budgets for student enrollment growth revenue after it is earned.

adjusts?

The District's budget may be reduced within a fiscal year by State revenues produced by non-enrollment-driven means. If the State experiences a shortfall in State-wide property tax collection or an overall State revenue shortfall, the District may experience a reduction in anticipated revenues mid-year. This would typically occur in February when it is too late to cancel classes for that year, but may require a reduction of class offerings in the subsequent year.

- C-02 "VCCCD is not in compliance with the State Requirement of 75% of classes being taught by full-time instructors."

The 75% requirement is an employment target set by the State of California. The District is in compliance with the law. The law reads as follows:

"If a district's full-time faculty percentage, as calculated pursuant to Section 53308, is less than 75 percent, the following shall apply:

(3) districts which, as determined from their base data, had a full-time faculty percentage of less than 67 percent shall apply up to 40 percent of their program improvement to allocation as necessary to reach the 75 percent standard...."

The 75 percent is a target to reach and the District is by no means non-compliant as stated in the Grand Jury's report. The entire statute (51025 Full-Time/Part-Time Faculty) is found on page 306 of Title V.

- C-09 "Adequate plans were not prepared for Measure S prior to placing it on the ballot, specifically, no Facilities Master Plan was in place before Measure S was put on the ballot."

To clarify, each campus was in possession of a facilities master plan, albeit of various age and currency. Measure S provided a reason (and the funding) to revise these plans to accommodate current "individual college academic master planning" as a part of the implementation of Measure S.

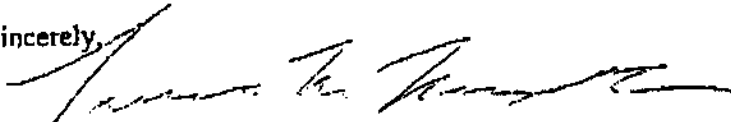
July 5, 2006

Honorable John R. Smiley
Page 4 of 4

Thank you for your interest in the Ventura County Community College District. We look forward to working with you and others as we build the finest Community College District in California.

Should you require additional information or if I can be of assistance, please contact me at your leisure.

Sincerely,



James M. Meznik, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Cc: James H. Decker, Foreperson
Trustees
College Presidents
Vice Chancellors

Attachment: Grand Jury Report

Table 1
Comparison of Core Courses Offered by VCCCD Colleges
Fall + Spring 2000-01 and Fall + Spring 2005-2006

Moorpark College				
	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Number of students	13,677	13,030	13,704	13,360
Total number of sections	1,675	1,748	1,541	1,481
English Core	76	72	95	83
Mathematics Core	111	111	129	119
Social Sciences Core	195	203	240	220
Funding per full-time Equivalent student (FTES)	\$ 3,112		\$ 3,814	

Oxnard College				
	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Number of students	7,554	7,230	6,259	6,143
Total number of sections	821	808	646	669
English Core	39	38	41	38
Mathematics Core	65	59	49	48
Social Sciences Core	96	89	82	73
Funding per full-time Equivalent student (FTES)	\$ 3,732		\$ 5,399	

Ventura College				
	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Number of students	12,620	12,493	12,025	12,073
Total number of sections	1,350	1,491	1,179	1,213
English Core	34	34	49	46
Mathematics Core	65	67	65	65
Social Sciences Core	127	143	134	136
Funding per full-time Equivalent student (FTES)	\$ 3,264		\$ 4,102	