

**Minutes of the Study Session of the Board of Trustees  
San Mateo County Community College District  
October 15, 2008  
San Mateo, CA**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** President Richard Holober, Vice President-Clerk Karen Schwarz, Trustees Helen Hausman, Dave Mandelkern and Patricia Miljanich, and Student Trustee Virginia Medrano Rosales

**Others Present:** Chancellor Ron Galatolo, Vice Chancellor José Nuñez, Skyline College Vice President Regina Stanback-Stroud, College of San Mateo President Michael Claire, Cañada College President Tom Mohr, and District Academic Senate President Patty Dilko

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**DISCUSSION OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

President Holober said there is a request to add the following item to the Closed Session agenda: potential litigation – 1 case. The Board voted 5-0 to add this item.

President Holober said staff has requested that tonight's meeting be adjourned in memory of Nellie Leong, a retiree and long-term employee in the District Office, who passed away on September 25.

**MINUTES**

It was moved by Trustee Miljanich and seconded by Trustee Hausman to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of September 24, 2008. The motion carried, all members voting "Aye."

It was moved by Trustee Hausman and seconded by Vice President Schwarz to approve the minutes of the Special Closed Session of the Board of October 7, 2008. The motion carried, all members voting "Aye."

**STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS: CHANGES IN ASSIGNMENT, COMPENSATION, PLACEMENT, LEAVES, STAFF ALLOCATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION OF ACADEMIC AND CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL (08-10-1A)**

It was moved by Trustee Miljanich and seconded by Trustee Hausman to approve the actions in Board Report No. 08-10-1A. The motion carried, all members voting "Aye."

**Other Recommendations**

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 08-12, DECLARING THE INTENTION TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES FROM THE PROCEEDS OF OBLIGATIONS TO BE ISSUED BY THE DISTRICT AND DIRECTING CERTAIN ACTIONS (08-10-100B)**

It was moved by Vice President Schwarz and seconded by Trustee Miljanich to approve adoption of Resolution No. 08-12. The motion carried, all members voting "Aye."

## **INFORMATION REPORTS**

### **OFFICIAL CENSUS REPORT (08-10-1C)**

Vice Chancellor Jing Luan said that for fall 2008, the District had an overall increase of 3.1% in student enrollment compared to fall 2007. There was a moderate increase in concurrently enrolled students. In addition, there were 650 more students with high school diplomas or equivalent. Vice Chancellor Luan said the last page of the printed report, showing distribution of students by gender and ethnicity, is relevant to tonight's Study Session in terms of student placement and results.

## **STUDY SESSION**

### **College Readiness and College Success (08-10-2C)**

Vice Chancellor Luan said tonight's Study Session is in response to a concern expressed by the Board regarding students' lack of readiness and low placement rates. He introduced the presenters: College of San Mateo Vice President of Instruction Susan Estes, College of San Mateo Vice President of Student Services Jennifer Hughes, Cañada College Dean of Humanities Katie Townsend-Merino, Skyline College Vice President of Student Services Lori Adrian, and Skyline College Vice President of Instruction Regina Stanback-Stroud.

Vice President Estes said the presentation will be divided into three segments: data, successful strategies and practices at each College, and discussion of "where do we go from here." After each segment, the presenters will pause to engage in dialogue. A sample math placement test was administered to the Board and audience, in part to illustrate the emotional component of test taking that students face. Vice President Stanback-Stroud emphasized that placement tests are high-stake as they determine the level of class into which a student is placed, which in turn may determine the number of years the student will be at the College.

Vice Chancellor Luan distributed information on high school graduates placement data from 2003 to 2007; a copy is attached to the official minutes of record. The data includes Math and English placements at each College and Districtwide into Basic Skills, Degree Applicable, and Transferable; Vice Chancellor Luan said that, ideally, every high school graduate should place into transferable courses. The data also shows Math and English placement test results by gender and ethnicity at each College. Vice President Luan asked for questions and comments on the data section of the report.

President Holober asked if students who are placed at the basic skills level have been able to progress to the degree applicable or transferable level. Vice President Estes said that movement is slow and very few students progress to the transferable level. Specific data, as well as strategies which have proven successful in helping students progress more quickly, will be examined later in the presentation.

President Mohr asked if there is data on where students are placed in relation to what their goals are, i.e. placement may be more important to a student who plans to transfer to a four-year college. Vice President Estes said she will put this on a list of items which come up during the conversation for further consideration.

President Dilko asked if there is data on when students take placements tests during their tenure at the District. Vice President Estes said there is no specific data. Students' educational goals as stated during the matriculation process determine whether they should be moving into placement testing, orientation and counseling. However, many students do not self-declare on the rather cumbersome application whether they want to pursue a transfer degree, associate degree or certificate. President Dilko suggested looking at modifying the application and requiring that placement tests be taken by all students. Vice President Adrian noted that information needs to be recaptured because students may change their goals many times.

Trustee Hausman asked if non-English speaking students face an additional handicap. Vice President Estes said there is a separate ESL track with four levels. The key issue is that students be placed correctly their first

semester and the Colleges try to help students determine the correct placement. However, students are not required to take the ESL test and many take native English tests that are not in their best long-term interest.

Dean Townsend-Merino presented the report on Cañada College; a copy of her report is attached to the official minutes of record. At Cañada, student placements into transferable courses are generally rising. There are important variations in placements by ethnicity, but there is evidence that ethnicity ceases to be a factor in sequence completion once mastery is achieved. There is some evidence that a low placement acts as a disincentive to take the course, and higher placement significantly increases the likelihood of sequence completion. There is also some evidence that students face high test anxiety and/or poor awareness of the importance of placement, making intervention prior to assessment essential. Successful intervention strategies are data informed and resource intensive, and include learning communities such as First Year Experience and Crossing Borders, the Summer Bridge programs which are under development, and partnerships with high schools and early college high schools.

Vice President Hughes discussed strategies to help students through the testing experience. College of San Mateo's Priority Enrollment Program (PEP) offers an intensive one-day assessment, orientation and counseling session for incoming students. There is a follow-up telephone call to every student who goes through PEP. A classified staff member who is pursuing a Masters Degree in Counseling also follows up with all Basic Skills students. CSM is working on expansion of the Student Ambassador program to help Basic Skills students through challenges. CSM is also developing test preparation workshops to be implemented in spring 2009, and will work with at least one high school partner to explore offering the workshops at the high school.

Vice President Estes said successful strategies for improving student success include integrative learning programs; she introduced a video clip showing students and teachers talking about their positive experiences in these programs. Vice President Estes said students in learning communities feel a part of the College, feel supported by faculty, and believe they will be able to transfer. In the fall terms, students in learning communities outperformed other students 62.9% to 42%. Younger students, African American students and Pacific Islander students in learning communities all succeeded at significantly higher rates than other students.

Vice Presidents Adrian and Stanback-Stroud distributed copies of their PowerPoint presentation; a copy is attached to the official minutes of record. Vice President Stanback-Stroud said Skyline employs a comprehensive, multi-faceted and integrated framework to improve student success. Specific tools include assessment; integrated Student Services and Instruction, including learning communities; a welcoming and empowering climate, including student clubs, Common Ground and multicultural celebrations; partnership with high schools for a smooth transition; professional development for faculty and staff; and support for innovation through grants and the President's Innovation Fund.

Vice President Adrian said Skyline conducted a one-year self study to examine students' first year experience. This study resulted in five major recommendations, including mandatory orientation. A second one-year study examined how students who place in Basic Skills are served. Together, the First Year Experience and the Basic Skills Initiative make up the College Success Plan, with different approaches and programs aimed at improving student success. Vice Presidents Adrian and Stanback-Stroud showed a video highlighting innovative programs which allow students to "dream out loud" and achieve a brighter future.

Trustee Miljanich asked how colleagues in the high schools are made aware of programs at the Colleges. Vice President Estes said some promotional materials were designed so that they can be taken to high schools. Trustee Miljanich said it would be helpful to have materials that relay information on all three Colleges. Vice Chancellor Luan said the first San Mateo County Educational Summit will be held on February 6, 2009 and will present an opportunity to share information.

Trustee Hausman said the Colleges have been imaginative and innovative in their approaches to student success. Vice President Estes said the presenters have offered examples of innovative approaches in some sections of courses, and the Colleges now need to find ways to expand their efforts.

Trustee Mandelkern asked if anything is being done to share information on programs that are successful at one College and might be worth replicating at another, such as Skyline's Hermanos Program and College of San Mateo's Writing in the End Zone Program. He said that start-up costs might be reduced through sharing programs. Dean Townsend-Merino said Cañada has considered the Hermanos Program but limited funds present a challenge. Vice President Stanback-Stroud said the Colleges do share information and often have similar programs with different titles. She said that even with similar programs, each College must pay for the cost of offering the class, counseling, etc. President Dilko added that discourse on programs takes place at College Council and Academic Senate, along with other groups. President Claire said that all of the Colleges subscribe to List Serve, allowing them to be aware of programs at the state and national level.

President Holober asked how many students who potentially could benefit from programs actually participate in them, and if students who have had success in the programs reach out to peers. Dean Townsend-Merino said Cañada is adding sections in Learning Community courses. Vice President Adrian said the Kabayan and ASTEP Programs are growing in popularity. She said students who have been through the Hermanos Program go into the community to recruit others. President Claire said members of the College of San Mateo football team who have participated in the Writing in the End Zone Program are bringing in friends from communities not previously served.

Vice President Schwarz said it is important to get high school students excited about going to college; she asked how students can be made aware of the various programs at the Colleges before they enroll. President Estes said there is discussion about setting up a Learning Community class in the high school, in which students would take both a high school and college course. Dean Townsend Merino talked about the partnership with the Phoenix Academy which will begin next year, and about the Fast Track Program at East Palo Alto Academy. Vice President Hughes said there is discussion about administering placement tests to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders to make them aware of what they need to do in order to go to college. Trustee Miljanich said many high school students need one-on-one mentoring and nurturing experiences in small groups.

Trustee Miljanich said there must be communication at different levels, such as faculty-to-faculty, board-to-board, etc. She added that other organizations are engaged in the same kinds of issues and should be included in the discussions. Vice President Schwarz said there has been discussion about the District hosting a San Mateo County School Boards Association meeting to highlight what the Colleges offer. Vice President Stanback-Stroud said the Board can also make an intentional statement that they are committed to increasing student readiness and student success.

Vice President Estes said the Vice Presidents will discuss how to implement the following suggestions which were offered at this meeting:

- Additional data, based on educational goal.
- Data regarding when students take placement test.
- Student equity issues.
- How often do high school partners have opportunity to view videos; how can we get message out to more?
- How to expand the programs that have proven success.
- How do we share best practices with each other?
- How many students participate in the programs designed to help students be successful?

- How can we promote these programs more in the high schools -- must be messaged on many levels (e.g. faculty to faculty).
- Invite boards, including those from other segments (e.g. high schools) and representatives from other organizations to visit with us.
- Consider Board goal regarding increasing college readiness and student success.

**RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION**

The Board recessed to closed session at 8:35 p.m.  
The Board reconvened to Open Session at 10:28 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSIONS ACTIONS TAKEN**

President Holober reported that, at the Closed Session just concluded, the Board considered the personnel items listed on the printed agenda and voted 5-0 to approve the actions in Board Report No. 1-A and 1-B. The Board also held a conference with the Agency Labor Negotiator as specified on the agenda and met with attorneys to discuss one potential case of litigation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Trustee Miljanich and seconded by Trustee Hausman to adjourn the meeting in memory of Nellie Leong. The motion carried, all members voting "Aye." The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

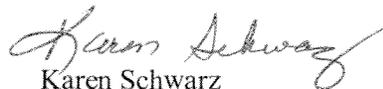
The next meeting of the Board will be a Regular Meeting on October 29, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the District Board Room.

Submitted by



Ron Galatolo  
Secretary

Approved and entered into the proceedings of the October 29, 2008 meeting.



Karen Schwarz  
Vice President-Clerk