

sharing memories

Contra Costa Community College District 1948–2008

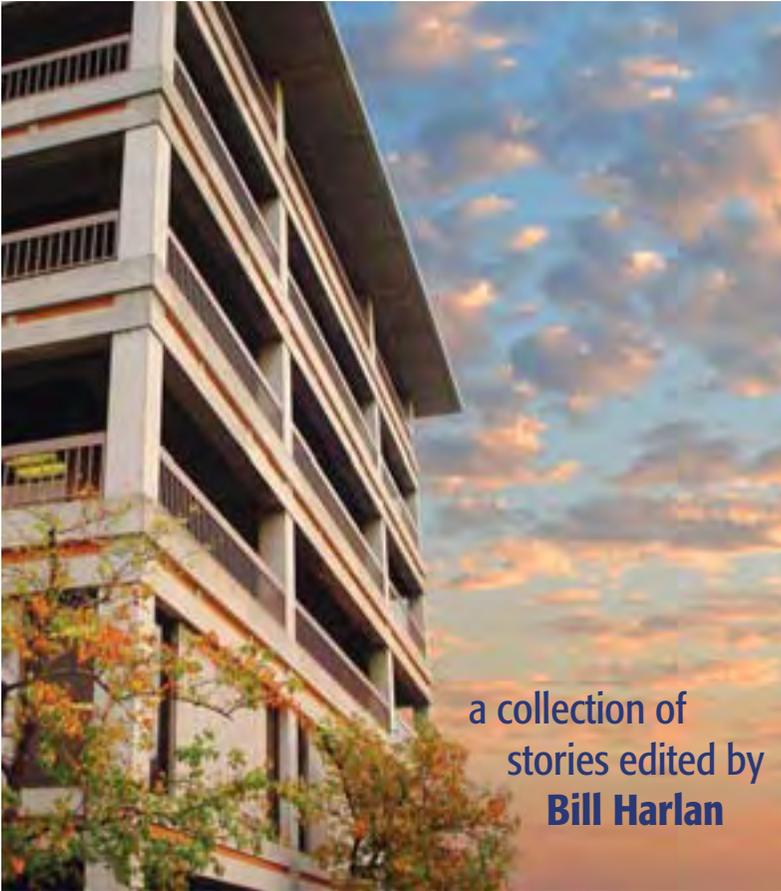


a collection of stories
edited by **Bill Harlan**

FIRST EDITION

sharing memories

Contra Costa Community College District 1948–2008



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stories edited by
Bill Harlan

Contra Costa Community College District
Martinez, California

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Cover photo group (from top): East Contra Costa Junior College ground-
breaking, 1951; first Governing Board; Contra Costa Junior College District
Office, 1950; Los Medanos College construction, 1973; West Contra Costa
Junior College International Club students, circa 1951

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Foreword

ISN'T IT AMAZING WHERE SERENDIPITY and an adventurous spirit can take us? My relationship with the Contra Costa Community College District (District) began in 1989. My colleague Thais Kishi, who was then a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin, told me about an opening for a dean at Los Medanos College (LMC) in Pittsburg, California. As Thais described the college and the opportunity, they both sounded interesting, so I decided to apply.

I was contacted for an interview while participating in a League for Innovation leadership program in Charlotte, North Carolina. When I told the league's executive director, Terry O'Banion, about my interview, he was thrilled. He said, "You won't believe this, but a manager from LMC is attending the meeting." It gets better. The manager was Sandy Acebo, who had formerly held the dean's position for which I was applying. Terry called LMC President Chet Case on my behalf and encouraged him to accommodate my schedule. Then he introduced me to Sandy. We connected immediately, and she prepared me for my interview over breakfast one morning. Serendipity, indeed!

It never dawned on me until I sat waiting for my interview that I didn't know anyone in California. It was only my second time in the state, and I knew if I accepted the position, the life I had known in Louisiana and Texas would change dramatically and that my children and I would be in for a real adventure. Some 20 years have passed since that interview. The District opened its arms to me and provided wonderful opportunities to learn and grow—at LMC, the District Office, Contra Costa College, and, for the past four years, at the District Office for the third time.

I am so thankful that no momentary lapse of courage kept me from deciding to accept the position. I cannot imagine a better place to work and fulfill my educational calling. Yes, the District has faced tremendous challenges, but this county and this community have always stood tall against adversity, supporting higher education as a gateway to future success and a better quality of life.

This 60th anniversary book, *Sharing Memories: Contra Costa Community College District, 1948–2008*, is a contribution to the District's legacy of action, visionary leadership, committed employees, and tireless community supporters. It shares the stories of events, decisions, and activities that shaped the unique character of our colleges, and mirrors the societal challenges they faced. It reflects the many changes that have happened since the last edition in 1986, including efforts to increase the diversity of the faculty and staff to match the ongoing changes in our student population and communities.

This eclectic collection of personal stories is by no means comprehensive. Our rich legacy could never be captured fully in a single volume. However, it does convey the challenges our founders overcame, provides an understanding of our complex and diverse community, and helps celebrate the many successes the District has achieved during its 60-year history.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to my friend Bill Harlan, who spearheaded this ambitious project. As a former faculty member and District administrator, Bill was not only the right person to understand the sensitivities of the issues we faced, but also had the original vision of sharing our history through this important collection. This book will be a must-read for future employees of the District.

Finally, this book is dedicated to our Contra Costa County community. On behalf of the District employees and trustees, we are honored to accept the responsibility of meeting the higher education needs of our community, and we look forward to another wonderful 60 years of providing educational opportunities for the thousands of students who come to our campuses.

Sincerely,

Helen Benjamin, Ph.D.

Chancellor



Introduction

WHEN CHANCELLOR HELEN BENJAMIN asked me to write a history of the Contra Costa Community College District, I spent several days going through the archives at the District Office. I was overwhelmed by the amount of information I would have to synthesize into a coherent narrative. I was even more impressed by the many accounts individuals had written over the years about specific events in which they had been involved. It occurred to me that the best service I could perform on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of this institution was to honor some of the people who had helped shape the District by letting you hear their voices.

What follows is a small sampling of the wealth of words I discovered. I make no claim that it is comprehensive. I began by looking at some of the key events in our collective history and finding what people wrote at the time or what they could share looking back at their involvement. I followed as many leads as I could—names suggested by people at the District Office and at each of the campuses—and I asked everyone which crucial events they thought had brought about the curious organizational culture that all of us—students, employees, policy makers—encounter when we come to

the District. This history recounts many of those events, and I hope its publication will prompt others to share their stories and insights. *We invite you to continue to share your stories on the District website at www.acd.edu/60th/Memories/.*

My own story began in spring 1962, when I arrived at Diablo Valley College (DVC), my newly issued UC Berkeley M.A. in hand, as a student teacher in the English Department under the tutelage of Bob Martincich. It was the semester in which the epic battle between the superintendent, Drummond McCunn, and most of the faculty, staff, and administrators of the District came to a dramatic conclusion. Every day there were manifestos in the mailboxes, breathlessly repeated reports or rumors in the lunchroom, and front-page stories in the local papers. I often think this experience was what shaped much of my subsequent career in the District. It was an adrenaline-pumping routine of “teach a class, sign a petition, man the barricades!”

In fall 1964, after being turned down for the same position two years earlier, I returned to DVC as a full-time English instructor. Over the next 45 years, in addition to my highly satisfying career in the classroom, I have had the opportunity to do many other things: help put together the first College Readiness Program, serve as president of the DVC Faculty Senate, work as one of the founders of the United Faculty and serve as president when we negotiated the first comprehensive contract, do a stint in Sacramento as a part-time lobbyist for community college issues, craft the legislation for the flexible calendar and assist in implementing it in the District, and, finally, help establish the DVC campus in San Ramon. I retired from my full-time position in 1999, but as we publish this history, I am still teaching a section of Shakespeare online.

The experience of compiling this collection of reminiscences has given me the chance to relive some of these events and to make contact with colleagues whom I had not seen in years. It has also shown me that one of the benefits of working in a vital, changing environment is that so many people are exploring their potential, in big ways and small, all at the same time. All their stories provide the narrative thread that defines this enterprise.

Paradoxically, the Contra Costa Community College District is an entity that few of those involved with it ever consider. The primary identification for most of the students, faculty, and staff is with their college campus. The

colleges have a long tradition of fierce autonomy, so that any one campus hardly acknowledges the existence of the other two, except to grumble that they are receiving too much of the precious resources. But if you examine the development of the colleges and their relationship with the District over their complete history, you see that each campus has experienced the same challenges and opportunities. And although each college faced these events at different times and was affected by them and handled them in different ways, you come away realizing how remarkably similar the three colleges really are.

There are, however, three significant events that affected all the people of the District at the same time and in similar ways, and these events have all had a long-term effect on the development of the institutions. The first was the struggle with and eventual firing of the first superintendent/chancellor, Drummond McCunn. Even though that battle culminated in spring 1962, long before many of those reading this account were born, it profoundly shaped the ways we think and act. There is a suspicion of and hostility toward the “District Office” that was born out of and nurtured through a long battle at the very beginning of our institutional memory. This tension is most often apparent whenever what some perceive as “centralization” is suggested. It is also seen in a kind of defiance to authority. One of our recently hired chancellors told me the story of being approached in a receiving line during a ceremony honoring his hiring. An unnamed instructor greeted him by declaring, “Don’t forget, we ran off one son of a bitch already, and we can do the same to you.” Even though it had been almost four decades since the dispatch of the earlier son of a bitch, the threat and the sentiment behind it were alive and well.

The second major event that shaped us as an institution was even more sweeping in its scope: the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. In the wake of that draconian cost-cutting measure, many programs were terminated and others were severely curtailed. Well over 100 employees were summarily fired. It would take 10 years before enrollments were restored to pre-1978 levels. As serious as the effect was on the individual colleges, more significant was the effect on how the District was funded and governed. Since the state was forced to assume the burden of financing community-college operations, it also took over the role of determining to a great extent what

should be taught and how. Sacramento introduced transformative mandates, such as a formal matriculation process and the omnibus reform bill SB 1785, which dramatically changed who could teach what. In response to the havoc brought on by the passage of Proposition 13, the faculty and staff got organized and pushed to establish comprehensive contracts to protect themselves. That profoundly changed the ways in which we relate to one another. The 1978–79 school year was a watershed in the history of the District. All the old certainties were profoundly shaken.

The third major event was what I call the struggle for equity, access, and inclusion. It happened with different groups—ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians, disabled—at different times, and the colleges, after resistance and reluctance, found ways to accept equity, open up access, and begin the process of inclusion. It is one of the reasons we have survived and thrived as an institution. Because we have been able to adapt and reach accommodations, our institution helped to lead the way for the larger society.

Throughout these critical passages, the colleges have continued to pursue the perfect definition of general education, the Holy Grail of community colleges. It has proven to be particularly difficult to secure, but as several writers here suggest, the search for the ideal is an ongoing process that helps us define ourselves as the outside world impinges.

Over the six decades of its existence, the College District has served the needs of some one million local citizens. It has done so with commitment and innovation. I hope this collection of memories will honor all those who have dedicated their lives to this noble endeavor.

I wish to acknowledge everyone who contributed to this history. **Karl Drexel** hired me at DVC and **John Porterfield** was my teacher and mentor in my first years at the college. Both were giants in the history of the District, and both are now gone, but they leave us their achievements and their wisdom. Two more important visionaries, **Charles Collins**, from Los Medanos College, and **Dick Worthen**, from DVC, are represented in these pages. Two of my colleagues, **Ruth Sutter** and **Beatrice Taines**, passed away while this project was under way, but we have their informative accounts here. Retirees who contributed included **Beverly Reardon Dutra**, **Don Mahan**, **Susie Goldstein**, **Marge Lasky**, **Marianne Goodson**, **Jean Knox**, **Diane Scott-Summers**, **Clark Sturges**, **Judy Vroman**, **Vince Custodio**, **Joan Tucker**, **Eve-**

lyn Patterson, Nannette Finley-Hancock, Dianne McClain, Jim Lacy, Baji Majette Daniels, and Chet Case. Two former Board members provided their own special perspectives—Gene Ross and Maria Viramontes.

I am indebted to the insights provided by those who are still employed with the District: Terry Armstrong, Thais Kishi, Chris Leivas, Bruce Koller, Linda Kohler, Jeff Michels, Gene Huff, and Greg Tilles. Two contributors who provided invaluable advice and direction are my old friends, Richard Livingston of Los Medanos and Bob Martincich of Contra Costa. I am grateful for the suggestions from Presidents McKinley Williams, Judy Walters, and Peter García. Former Chancellor Jack Carhart and George Cole, Leroy Mims, and Gloria Gideon, retirees from Contra Costa, provided a wealth of stories and insights. Finally, I am grateful for the support, hard work, and patience of Linda Cerruti, Suzanne Fox, and Tim Leong of the District Office and for the indispensable assistance of my editor, Molly Walker. Most of all, I appreciate my old friend, Chancellor Helen Benjamin, for giving me this opportunity to rediscover what it was that made my career such a life-changing event.

Bill Harlan
Walnut Creek, California

Historical Overview of the Contra Costa Community College District

Determining the Need for a Junior College District

Thanks to the enlightened and tenacious leadership of many educators, administrators, and citizens, as well as members of local, county, and state government, the Contra Costa Community College District (District) that we know today was established in 1948. Here are the key events that led to the District's hard-fought beginnings.

OCTOBER 3, 1939 Contra Costa County Board of Education passes a resolution urging county high school districts to join in a state study about the role a junior college would play in vocational and technical training.

JANUARY 2, 1940 The Committee of 100, a lay advisory group, issues a report that the area's high assessed valuation and broad tax base ensures a well-endowed district. On January 4, a public meeting held in Concord to discuss the proposed junior college district is attended by several hundred people.

1943 AND 1944 A subcommittee of the Contra Costa County Development Association's Postwar Planning Committee studies the general problem of public education and concludes that vocational training is the most urgent priority, and a technical institute should be established as a memorial to veterans of World War II. Agreement is reached that this could best be established through formation of a junior college district.

EARLY 1945 Six high school districts (Alhambra, Antioch—Live Oak, John Swett, Liberty, Mt. Diablo, and Pittsburg) together petition the State Board of Education to authorize a junior college study.

JANUARY 15, 1946 Following completion of the study, the state reviews it, finds the plan financially sound, and an election is called. The vote is 1,702 to 1,548 against formation of a junior college district.

APRIL 8, 1947 As a result of legislative action, the State Department of Education and the University of California are directed to investigate the need for facilities for higher education in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. An appointed bi-county Survey Committee, under the chairmanship of Dean Freeman of the University of California, holds its first meeting at Haviland Hall on the UC campus.

JUNE 22, 1948 A subcommittee, formed to study junior college needs and unification, considers three possibilities: a bi-county junior college district, upward extension of high school through the addition of 13th and 14th grades, and the formation of a junior college district in each county. On a vote of 27 to 2, the Contra Costa group of the subcommittee recommends the formation of a single district for the county.

DECEMBER 14, 1948 An election is held on this date for the formation of a junior college district and for two unification proposals: one to unify 13 school districts within the area served by the Mt. Diablo Union High School; the other to unify six districts served by Liberty Union High School. The junior college district is approved by a vote of 6,062 to 5,288. The Mt. Diablo unification is also approved by a margin of two to one, but Liberty unification is defeated.

Highlights of 1948–1959

Wanted: A People's College in Contra Costa

DECEMBER 27, 1948 Contra Costa Board of Supervisors officially declares the Junior College District formed. County Superintendent of Schools Bryan Wilson immediately appoints a five-member Board of Trustees.

JANUARY 24, 1949 Trustees hold first Board meeting, elect George Gordon as president, and adopt Contra Costa Junior College District as the official name.

MAY 20, 1949 Appointed trustees are elected to office.

JUNE 15, 1949 Drummond McCunn is appointed superintendent.

AUGUST 1949 District purchases the old Robert Borland residence at 1005 Escobar Street, Martinez, for its offices.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1949 First classes are held at Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg.

JANUARY 6, 1950 West Campus holds classes at Kaiser Shipyard, Richmond.

JANUARY 1950 District offices move from temporary location at Hotel James to 1005 Escobar Street in Martinez.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1950 East Campus holds classes at Martinez elementary school.

NOVEMBER 2, 1950 Board purchases Roche property adjoining Contra Costa Golf Club as a site for East Campus.

SEPTEMBER 1952 East Campus holds classes on Pleasant Hill permanent campus.

APRIL 13, 1953 District acquires San Pablo acreage for a permanent West Campus site.

SEPTEMBER 1953 Library Building becomes the first permanent structure at East Campus.

JUNE 25, 1956 Karl Drexel is appointed director of East Campus.

SEPTEMBER 1956 West Campus holds classes on San Pablo permanent campus.

OCTOBER 1957 Construction of Technical Education Building begins at East Campus.

JANUARY 27, 1958 By official Governing Board action, West Campus is renamed Contra Costa College (CCC), and East Campus is renamed Diablo Valley College (DVC).

NOVEMBER 24, 1958 Fact-finding report on communication between faculties and superintendent, prepared by the California Teachers Association, is presented to the Board.

JANUARY 1959 Construction of Life Science Building starts at DVC.

Highlights of 1960–1970

Challenge and Confrontation: On the Shoulders of Giants

DECEMBER 6, 1961 Superintendent McCunn makes a presentation to the California Association of School Administrators regarding teaching about communism in the District's schools.

1961 CCC's Biological Science Building opens.

JANUARY–APRIL 1962 Series of Board meetings are held at which the superintendent, faculty, students, and the public express their opinions on the superintendent's attack on unnamed faculty members because of their alleged political beliefs.

MARCH 26, 1962 District accepts quit claim deed for Camp Stoneman, site of the future Los Medanos College.

MARCH 1962 Presentation of investigative report of the District by the California Association of School Administrators, California Junior College Association, California School Board Association, and the California Teachers Association.

MAY 28, 1962 Board terminates the services of Superintendent McCunn.

1962–1965 District is run by Board President George Gordon, Karl Drexel of DVC, and George Faul of CCC.

1963 CCC's Library Building opens.

1964 CCC's Music Building opens.

SEPTEMBER 1964 District hires Johnson, Cometta and Confer to develop a master plan for the District, calling for four campuses: CCC, DVC, an eastern campus in Antioch/Pittsburg, and a southern campus in Danville/San Ramon.

1964 Martin Luther King addresses 2,000 students at CCC.

MARCH 1965 Karl Drexel is named superintendent; Bill Niland becomes president of DVC; Ray Dondero is named president of CCC.

FALL 1965 DVC's Academic Senate forms.

1966–1972 Series of bond issues fail to gain the necessary two-thirds approval of the voters.

SUMMER 1967 DVC's Summer College Readiness Program performs outreach to East County.

1968 Establishment of Special Programs at CCC leads the way for the formation of ethnic studies at the college.

AUGUST 1968 Dental Hygiene Program is established at DVC.

OCTOBER 1968 Joint Powers Authority is established to allow financing in conjunction with other local agencies; plans for District Office are approved.

DECEMBER 1968 Plan for East College is approved.

MAY 1969 Ray Dondero moves to the District Office; Bob Wynne becomes president of CCC.

NOVEMBER 1969 Vietnam Moratorium Day at DVC culminates in march through Pleasant Hill.

Highlights of 1970–1979

Growth and Loss

DECEMBER 1970 Jack Carhart is appointed president of East College.

APRIL 1971 Students strike at CCC over the election of student body officers.

NOVEMBER 1971 East College is named Los Medanos College (LMC); District is renamed Contra Costa Community College District.

JANUARY 1972 Student government at CCC closes down over the Governing Board's failure to establish a Martin Luther King holiday.

SEPTEMBER 1972 Women's Re-entry Program is started at DVC.

1973 Lloyd Farr becomes first African American Governing Board member.

SPRING 1974 Karl Drexel retires; Harry Buttimer is named chancellor.

1975 LMC opens in a permanent facility.

SEPTEMBER 1975 CCC's Physical Science and Planetarium Complex opens.

MAY 1976 United Faculty union is formed among District faculty and is recognized by the Board.

MAY 1977 Child Care Center at DVC is approved.

SEPTEMBER 1977 H. Rex Craig is appointed president of CCC.

JULY 1978 First student member of the Governing Board is seated.

OCTOBER 1978 Drastic cutbacks in staff and programs result from Proposition 13; summer session is cancelled throughout District.

NOVEMBER 1978 Little Theater Complex at CCC is approved.

Highlights of 1980–1989

State Control and Restricted Access

- JANUARY 1980** District observes first Martin Luther King holiday.
- MAY 1982** CCC President H. Rex Craig resigns and is replaced by Ray Dondero.
- SEPTEMBER 1982** Parking fees for students are instituted.
- JUNE 1983** Summer session is cancelled for the second time due to lack of funds.
- JANUARY 1984** State imposes tuition for the first time; enrollments drop.
- APRIL 1984** Chancellor Harry Buttimer steps down and is replaced by Jack Carhart.
- JANUARY 1985** Chet Case is appointed president of LMC.
- MAY 1984** Candy Rose is appointed president of CCC.
- JUNE 1984** DVC's William Niland retires; Phyllis Wiedman (Peterson) is appointed.
Two of the seven women presidents in the California community college system are in the District.
- OCTOBER 1985** DVC opens the Center for Higher Education, its outreach in San Ramon.
- DECEMBER 1985** District establishes the London Program for study abroad.
- JUNE 1986** State mandates matriculation, a formal process of assessment and counseling.
- MARCH 1988** District implements phone registration for students.
- JUNE 1988** Two state propositions provide the first capital outlay bonds and require that the colleges share at least 40 percent of the state budget with K–12.
- SEPTEMBER 1989** CCC opens the Middle College High School.

Highlights of 1990–1999

Expansion and Outreach

- DECEMBER 1990** Former student Maria Viramontes becomes the first Hispanic and the first woman Governing Board member.
- JULY 1991** Robert Jensen is appointed chancellor. Stanley Chin is named president of LMC.
- JULY 1992** Vice chancellor positions for finance, human resources, and educational programs and services are created and filled at the District Office.
- AUGUST 1995** LMC's new Music Building opens.
- JANUARY 1996** Charles Spence is appointed chancellor.
- JULY 1996** Raul Rodriguez is named president of LMC.
- AUGUST 1996** Mark Edelstein is named president of DVC.

JANUARY 1998 DVC's Margaret Leshner Student Union Building opens.

JUNE 1998 LMC's Brentwood Center opens.

JULY 1999 Helen Benjamin is appointed president of CCC.

Highlights of 2000–2009

New Facilities and Growth

SEPTEMBER 2001 Brentwood Center moves to new, larger location.

MARCH 2002 Contra Costa County citizens pass \$120 million facilities bond.

JULY 2002 Peter García is appointed president of LMC.

SEPTEMBER 2002 CCC celebrates the opening of the John and Jean Knox Center for the Performing Arts.

AUGUST 2005 Helen Benjamin is appointed chancellor.

JUNE 2006 Contra Costa County citizens pass a \$286 million facilities bond.

JULY 2006 McKinley Williams is appointed president of CCC.

OCTOBER 2006 New DVC Bookstore opens.

NOVEMBER 2006 DVC's new, permanent San Ramon Campus opens.

JANUARY 2007 Remodeled CCC Computer Technology Center, Library, and Learning Resource Center open.

AUGUST 2007 Judy Walters is appointed president of DVC.

JUNE 2008 CCC's new Student Services Building opens.

2007 New Learning Resources and Math buildings open at LMC.

2008 New Science Building opens at LMC.

PART I

Colleges Born in Strife



East Contra Costa Junior College (Diablo Valley College) groundbreaking,
Pleasant Hill, California, 1951

1

C H A P T E R



The second Contra Costa Junior College District Office,
1005 Escobar Street, Martinez, California, 1950

The Struggle to Establish a Junior College District

Charles Collins, Karl Drexel, and Dick Worthen

As this account by three of the important pioneers of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) makes clear, the District did not have an auspicious beginning. Geographic, social, and political forces shaped opposition to its creation; many of the same factors and political forces are still around today. There are some early unsung heroes, such as longtime County Superintendent of Schools Bryan O. Wilson, who seems to have always been there at critical junctures in the formation of the District and through its first decade. The other heroes were an informal coalition of civic, business, and labor leaders who worked both behind the scenes and publicly to win the election for the District's formation. Many

of these leaders were later appointed by Wilson to the original Governing Board.

This account describes some of the fault lines inherent in the selection of the first superintendent, Drummond McCunn, and the second tier of administrators, most of whom came from backgrounds very different from the K-12 business manager who was the chief administrator. The colleges attracted a number of people who brought their idealism and commitment to these new institutions. This tension resulted in a curious organizational anomaly, where the superintendent sought to impose a traditional K-12 structure on what were rapidly developing independent colleges that were busily defining themselves. These three authors tangled repeatedly with McCunn: Collins was forced to leave his job, Drexel was frequently harassed and marginalized, and Worthen was publicly attacked as a political subversive. Their account is hardly unbiased, but it does provide a useful perspective on our beginnings.

This account is taken from An Abstract of Thirty-seven Years of the Contra Costa Community College District Governing Board's Minutes in Historical Context, Contra Costa Community College District, May, 1987.

IN THE 1940s, which is where this story begins, a number of educators had been beating the drums for the establishment of a junior college in Contra Costa County, but not many voters were marching to the drummer. One of the proponents was Bryan O. Wilson, the county superintendent of schools. Even in 1939, before the county's population reached the 100,000 mark, Wilson insisted that the increasing industrialization of Contra Costa required a countywide post-high-school training institution. Since 1921, California legislation had authorized the creation of junior college districts along one of these lines: (1) a junior college district to be coterminous with a high school district; (2) a junior college district embracing two or more high school districts; and (3) a county district or at least a district including all the territory of the county not already preempted by an existing junior college district. Superintendent Wilson convinced the County Board of Education to pass a resolution urging Contra Costa County's high school districts to cooperate with the state in conducting a feasibility study. Throughout most

of 1940, a lay advisory group, the “Committee of 100,” tried to organize support for the establishment of a district by means of a countywide election. The population base was large enough to generate a sizable student body, and the property tax on the assessed valuation could have made it a rich district. But the efforts to call an election in June 1941 came to naught, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 ended any chances to establish a district until the war ended.

The next attempt showed the strange compromises that parochialism and political differences can generate. In 1944, the Postwar Planning Committee of the County Development Association recommended the formation of a junior college district. George Gordon, who sat on the future District’s Governing Board from 1949 to 1977, had this to say about the action: “. . . it should be pointed out that in 1943–44, the Development Association was dominated by members from West Contra Costa County, with the leader being Walter T. Helms, who was then superintendent of the Richmond Unified School District. Helms was opposed to a countywide junior college district. He wanted it integrated with his high school district—one that he could, and would, control.” This led to a political compromise that limited the proposed district to the central and eastern sections of the county. To make the idea more attractive to business and industrial interests and to garner patriotic support, the proposed district would have an institution for technical and vocational training, which was to be a memorial to veterans of World War II. The governing boards of the Martinez, Antioch, John Swett, Liberty, Mt. Diablo, and Pittsburg school districts went along with the proposal. The state feasibility study, which they requested, found that all the criteria in the California Education Code for forming a junior college district were met. In a special election held on January 15, 1946, the voters of the central and eastern portions of the county rejected the proposal in a close vote of 1,702 to 1,548.

The majority of voters in Antioch, Pittsburg, and Byron voted against the proposal because they believed they would be too far east of the presumptive site to profit from it. In addition, they felt the concentration of industry along the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers gave them enough assessed valuation to pay for their own junior college. The majority in Crockett and Martinez school districts also voted no because of the presumptive distance factor. The Contra Costa Taxpayers Association lobbied

against the measure because it was opposed in principle to the creation of any district that could levy a tax, no matter how worthy the purpose. Many of the more affluent families in all of the communities voted no because their children were enrolled at, or would one day enroll at, UC Berkeley, Saint Mary's College, Stanford University, or other elite institutions, so why should they support the creation of a junior college?

The naysayers had their moment of victory, but they were up against a tide of energy, of confidence in progress and in the future, and of a spirit of "let's get on with it" that came in the wake of World War II. The issue of a junior college district in this county would not stay dead.

The naysayers had their moment of victory, but they were up against a tide of energy, of confidence in progress and in the future, and of a spirit of "let's get on with it" that came in the wake of World War II. The issue of a junior college district in this county would not stay dead. The state, with a push from the University of California, financed a study of publicly supported higher education in California. The study's purpose was to ascertain the present and future needs for postsecondary education. The result was the "Report of a Survey of Needs of California in Higher Education" (the so-called "Strayer Report," named after Professor George D. Strayer of Columbia University, its director), which made a powerful case for the

enhancement of the state universities and the state colleges and for the rapid expansion of the junior college system.

An offshoot of the Strayer Report was the Bi-County Survey Committee, whose members studied the need for junior colleges in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The committee's chairman was Dr. Frank Freeman, dean of the School of Education at UC Berkeley. The chairman of the Junior College Subcommittee was O. J. Wohlgemuth, who later served as a District Board member from its formation until 1960. The Bi-County Survey Committee concluded there was a need for not one, but two, districts. Even that proved an underestimate. Alameda County alone spawned two districts: the huge current-day Peralta Community College District with its

four colleges and the South County Community College District, Chabot-Las Positas.

As the campaign to seek voter approval for the establishment of a county-wide junior college district got under way, the same political issues and the same political forces lined up against each other. The division by geography was just as present then as it is now. Neither the number of campuses nor the site(s) were specified. The voters in East County were sure they would get nothing (and they were right until the opening of Los Medanos College in 1974). The voters in Central County thought that the attraction of population would ensure the site would be placed in Richmond, or that one Central County town would be chosen to the dissatisfaction of all the others. Families, mostly middle class and above, whose children were at UC Berkeley and other prestigious universities, did not want to pay taxes for “junior” colleges for other people’s kids. This, too, had a geographic angle. In Central County, the smaller communities, especially Walnut Creek, Danville, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and San Ramon, were fast becoming middle- and upper-middle-class, suburban towns.

The Contra Costa County Taxpayers Association took its predictable negative stance. It made the claim that the taxpayer had reached his absolute limit and could not pay one more dollar of additional taxes. The Contra Costa County Farm Bureau and the Contra Costa Pomona Grangers echoed the argument of the taxpayers association. For those willing to listen, this charge was countered by the fact that the county’s 1948 assessed valuation was \$255 million, which ranked it third in the state for districts then supporting junior colleges.

This time, though, there were stalwart champions on the pro side as well. Led by Attorney Charles Hutchings, Jr., a Junior College Citizens Committee was organized and quickly drew some influential people in the county, such as Judge Donald Creedon; labor leader Robert Lee; attorney Robert Condon, who later served as a U.S. congressman; Richmond political analyst Bert Coffey, who became a founding Board member; Concord pioneer John Garaventa; well-known Martinez realtor C.A. “Cappy” Ricks; and community activist Mrs. W.G. Parks. They didn’t just lend their names to the cause. They set out to secure the endorsement and active support of every organization, service club, newspaper, and leader inside and outside the county.

Notable among the latter was Roy C. Simpson, the state superintendent of public instruction. Simpson was not really an outsider, however. At the time, his office had a Junior College Bureau whose function was to coordinate and assist all junior colleges within California. County Superintendent of Schools Bryan O. Wilson, who had been trying to get a junior college district for the county since the 1930s, again gave unstinting support. So, too, did two important educational organizations: the Contra Costa Principals Association and the county's many branches of the Parent-Teachers Association, whose members proved to be particularly good vote getters. Attorney George Gordon, after whom the District Office building is now named, marshaled all the support he could in Martinez, including that of the Martinez Real Estate Board. State Assemblyman George Miller, Jr., also used his considerable political clout on the pro side. In addition, editorial support and endorsements came from the area's two largest and most influential newspapers, the *Richmond Independent* and the *Oakland Tribune*, as well as from the *Martinez Gazette*, owned by former state Senator William Sharkey, Sr., and the *Concord Transcript*. In fact, most of the area's newspapers, including those in Antioch, Walnut Creek, and Lafayette, supported the issue.

We hear again from George Gordon: "The one group that had the greatest impact in the final days was that group of people who are identified with the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council (AFL) and Contra Costa County Building and Construction Trades Council. When it appeared that the formation was going to be defeated, several people identified with these unions—George Weise of the Carpenters; Erle Carter, secretary of the Teamsters; Bob Lee of the Laborers; Claude Rains, business manager of the Teamsters; and this writer, who then represented most of the AFL unions—met with Bryan O. Wilson at Della Pippa's on Pacheco Boulevard in Martinez about 10 days before the election. We put together about \$1,000 to finance the final advertisements in support of the District and in opposition to the taxpayers association. It was this final push that put the District over in 1948."

The pro side not only had worthy spokespeople, but also had some powerful arguments for them to present. In 1939 and again in 1946, the state had verified that Contra Costa County exceeded the mandated requirements of population, financial resources, and need for the formulation of

a junior college district. A survey by Superintendent Wilson's office found that of the 1,843 high school graduates in 1948, 700 said they would attend a local junior college if it were within commutable distance. Actually, 705 Contra Costa County students were enrolling in out-of-district junior colleges, which cost local taxpayers \$100,000 per year in out-of-district fees and brought them no nearer to having a college of their own. During the war decade, the population of the county had more than doubled, from 100,450 to 249,322, and there was no end in sight to this growth. UC Berkeley furnished figures showing that it cost a family a minimum of \$1,000 per year to send a student away to college. It would cost the family less than \$100 to send that student to a local junior college, which would allow him or her to live at home and pay no tuition. For the wary voter who didn't want to plunge right into the deep water, the specious argument was used that this election was only to establish a junior college district, not build a campus; hence it involved no immediate cost.

On December 14, 1948, the special election was held. This time the vote favored the establishment of the District, 6,034 to 5,244. A victory by just 790 votes was hardly a ringing mandate, particularly since only 10 percent of the electorate had gone to the polls. Even so, in a democracy, a majority of one is still a majority. On December 27, 1948, the Board of Supervisors declared the Contra Costa Junior College District as officially created.

Getting Started

AFTER YEARS OF DISAPPOINTMENT and frustration in his efforts to establish a junior college district, County Superintendent of Schools Wilson wasted no time once the votes were in. Less than a month later, on January 12, 1949, Wilson used his authority to appoint an interim five-member Board of Trustees.

Wilson's judgment must have coincided closely with that of the county's voters, for four of the five men he appointed to that first Board were repeatedly reelected in subsequent years. To represent the eastern region, he selected Brentwood's Fred R. Abbott, an affable former YMCA director and insurance executive. Perhaps in recognition of his early support of

the junior college proposal, Wilson appointed Walnut Creek businessman O. J. Wohlgemuth to represent the south central area. He made the obvi-

The only thing these new Board members had was the legal authority to act. They had no tax money, thus no budget, no official place to meet, no office supplies, no secretarial services, and no administrators to execute their decisions.

ous choice for the north central region by selecting popular Martinez civic leader and attorney George R. Gordon. The western region of the county, with Richmond at its center, was the most populous area and thus was given two appointments: G. Elton Brombacher, a young, successful printer and businessman, and Bert Coffey, a highly respected, if controversial, political analyst and campaign director for Democratic Party candidates. The new Board elected George Gordon as its president, a post in which he often served from then until his resignation 28 years later in 1977. On May 20, 1949, these Wilson appointees were all confirmed by the voters as officially elected

members of what was then called the Board of Trustees and is now known as the Governing Board.

The only thing these new Board members had was the legal authority to act. They had no tax money, thus no budget, no official place to meet, no office supplies, no secretarial services, and no administrators to execute their decisions. However, Superintendent Wilson and the State Department of Education came to their rescue by providing a workspace, secretarial assistance, a full-time administrative assistant, and, most important, help from Wilson himself in advertising, recruiting, and screening for the brand-new Contra Costa Junior College District.

In his oral reminiscences, George Gordon reports that nearly 60 educators applied for the top job of superintendent. The papers on every one of them were diligently read by each Board member and, from this initial screening, six were selected to be interviewed. The Board members spent nearly every Saturday and Sunday in the spring of 1949 in either examining the *bona fides* of the applicants or in conducting long and intensive interviews. According to Gordon, they were looking primarily for a self-

directed organizer and financial expert and secondarily for an established educator. Other administrators could be found to shape the curriculum and employ the faculty.

The Board members were most impressed with a big, hearty, often humorous, “hail fellow well met” individual named Drummond J. McCunn, who was at that time assistant superintendent for business at the Pasadena Unified School District. As president and chairman of the 1949 Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade, he had the overall responsibility for the organization of the world-famous parade, and the Board believed that anyone who could pull off that complex feat, coupled with his other accomplishments, could put together a junior college district. The fact that he was a past president of both the Kiwanis Club and the Pasadena Junior Chamber of Commerce, and very active in other professional and civic organizations, seemed to outweigh the limitations that he had only taught at the junior high school level and had no experience with junior colleges. In 1950, after his appointment, he did receive a Doctor of Education degree from UCLA, and the Board must have been impressed when, at McCunn’s testimonial dinner, his ex-boss, the former superintendent of Pasadena schools, Dr. John A. Sexson, called him “one of the outstanding administrators in America” [*Contra Costa Junior College District’s Historical and Administrative Development*, by Robert E. Stoker]. Perhaps they should have listened to the silence from his more recent boss, Pasadena School Superintendent Willard Goslin, who chose to say nothing at the event. The Board, on June 15, 1949, named Drummond J. McCunn the District superintendent and gave him, by 1949 standards, the munificent annual salary of \$15,000.¹

¹ Jean Knox, an early instructor at WCCJC and a contributor to this collection, notes “the irony that McCunn was hired in the first place because Bert Coffey, who was one of McCunn’s first targets, capitulated to the impatience of his fellow trustees. They had all agreed that they would hire as superintendent only someone who had their unanimous support. They had, apparently, interviewed many without achieving unanimity, not because of one hold out, but because one or the other always disagreed. Time was running out; classes were to begin. Four Board members had okayed McCunn, but Coffey had not been available for the interviews. He was urged to meet with McCunn in Pasadena. Bert reported later (and before he was defeated for reelection in 1953) that he was cool about McCunn in the first place but allowed himself to be swayed by his impatient colleagues who just wanted to get the job done. Why ironic? Bert Coffey and soon-to-be Senator George Miller had managed the successful campaign for establishing the District. The successful

To compensate for Superintendent McCunn's recognized weakness in curriculum and instruction, the Board searched for a highly respected educator to serve as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. They did not particularly seek the superintendent's recommendation, but did listen attentively to Dr. Frank Lindsey, deputy superintendent of the California State Department of Education. Lindsey and other well-respected junior college educators suggested that J. Graham Sullivan might be interested and available. Sullivan had previously been assistant to the president of San Francisco City College and was, at the time, assistant superintendent for junior colleges and vocational education for the San Diego Unified School District. He was the only person the Board interviewed for the position and, after some dickering and compromising to meet his request for a four-year contract, the Board, at its August 1949 meeting, hired him, with McCunn formally proposing Sullivan, probably with some enthusiasm. However, by the mid-1950s, McCunn and Sullivan proved an incompatible team.

The Board members also had their own ideas about who should head the campus they had in mind for Richmond. The only candidate acceptable to Bert Coffey and Elton Brombacher, the two Richmond Board members, was John H. Porterfield. The other members deferred to their Richmond colleagues, so in the Board meeting on December 9, 1949, John Porterfield was named as director of Contra Costa Junior College at Richmond. Porterfield hailed from Idaho and was a Lincolnesque American who, through formal and self-education, had polished the farm boy he was into a deep-thinking educator and philosopher. He had been a high school teacher and a principal of McFarland High School in the Bakersfield district and, at the time of his selection, was serving as assistant superintendent to Walter Helms, superintendent of the Richmond Unified School District. This was the same Helms who once had ambitions to start his own district junior college.

campaign, of course, [was] why Bert was on the Board of Trustees. But Bert's history as a very good labor organizer in Richmond during the war is what triggered McCunn, who in all probability is the one who prompted Sam Yorty, as chair of the California Un-American Activities Committee, to subpoena Bert as a suspected communist. That, in turn, became the basis of a campaign, at the height of McCarthy's red-baiting hysteria, to defeat Bert when he was one of the two trustees first up for reelection to the Board."

As early as October 1949, the Board had gone on record that there would be at least two campuses, both comprehensive, one west and one central, with the possibility of a third devoted primarily to agriculture for the rural eastern and southeastern sections of the county. By the spring of 1950, the search was on for a leader for the second campus. J. Graham Sullivan had brought in Dr. Phebe Ward, on leave from her position as director of adult education in the San Francisco Unified School District, to be the interim District director of general education. The nation's educators knew Dr. Ward and she knew them. She convinced Leland L. Medsker, president of Wright Junior College in Chicago, that he should apply to head up this new junior college in California. In turn, she convinced Sullivan to support Medsker's candidacy. There were other applicants for this position, but Medsker had experience as a junior college teacher, director of adult education, junior college president, and even president of the American Association of Junior Colleges; hence, he stood head and shoulders above the other applicants. He was even able to negotiate a package deal in which he would select and bring with him Reed Buffington, a teacher of social sciences and assistant to Dr. Peter Masiko, division chairman in the social sciences at Wright Junior College. On May 22, 1950, both Medsker and Buffington were appointed, Medsker as director and Buffington as dean of general education (later called dean of instruction) of Contra Costa Junior College—East Campus.

Other second-echelon administrators had been appointed even before Buffington. As early as December 1949, Karl O. Drexel, then a counselor, English teacher, and athletic director for Alhambra High School in Martinez, was appointed assistant dean for student activities at the West Campus. A month later, on January 20, 1950, George (Bob) Faul, previously director of guidance, College of the Sequoias, on the strong recommendation of Graham Sullivan, was hired as dean of guidance and pupil personnel (later titled dean of student personnel) at West Campus, thereby becoming Drexel's titular boss. The initial leadership on the Richmond Campus was Porterfield, Faul, and Drexel, and at the East Campus was Medsker and Buffington. However, this balance didn't last long. Drexel admired and wanted to work for and with Porterfield, but McCunn decided to use Drexel's familiarity with Martinez and Central County and his strong political connections to help build

the East Campus. In June 1950, Drexel was reassigned with the same title, assistant dean of student activities, to the East Campus.

All of these first appointees—Sullivan, Porterfield, Medsker, Buffington, Faul, and Drexel—were destined to be in conflict with McCunn, and all of them, either by leaving or by outlasting McCunn, went on to more important positions. They also became widely recognized thinkers and spokesmen for the community college movement. Their beginning salaries, based on 1949–50 standards, did not predict their later eminence:

Sullivan	\$11,000	Porterfield	\$9,500	Buffington	\$7,000
Medsker	\$9,500	Faul	\$7,250	Drexel	\$7,000

Despite the contrast they present with contemporary compensation, these were good salaries in their day, and it is to the Board's credit that throughout the years it has acted to keep District salaries among the highest in the state. As early as January 1951, Board President George Gordon said regarding faculty (and by implication administrator) salaries: "Keep in mind it is the decision of this Board to maintain the highest salary schedule of junior colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area" [*Board minutes for January 26, 1951*]. The Board has been true to this early promise.

These administrators, led by Graham Sullivan and assisted by Phebe Ward, had to hire faculty, develop the curriculum, prepare the catalog, and open the colleges in record time. John Porterfield, appointed in December 1949, had West Campus offering classes to some 500 students by February 1950. Lee Medsker, his counterpart at East Campus, was selected in late May 1950, and had a small but complete college operating by September. Neither the Board nor Superintendent McCunn interfered with the local administrators in the selection of faculty. Porterfield, Faul, and Drexel at West Campus, and later Medsker, Buffington, and Drexel at East Campus, sandwiched faculty selection among a myriad of other duties. Considering the press of time, they did well in picking winners. It is interesting to look at the names of the original participants, for many of them moved on to leadership positions in other districts and not a few have had distinguished lifetime careers as instructors and administrators at the college they helped to found.

Both Porterfield and Medsker were committed to general education as an important criterion in faculty selection. But Medsker and Buffington took the interdisciplinary “Robert Hutchings definition” of the University of Chicago, whereas Sullivan, Ward, Porterfield, and Faul saw general education more in terms of meeting breadth requirements of the state’s university and state college campuses. Many years later, Porterfield, in his role as a consultant to Los Medanos College, helped to shape a general education program that became a national model for interdisciplinary education.

An even more important criterion for selection was the appointment of faculty who were student oriented. The Board members let everyone know that they wanted the best in counseling and guidance, and that they would be hiring faculty and counselors who had a student-centered point of view. As early as December 1949, Professor Arthur Brayfield of UC Berkeley, who was well regarded nationally, was engaged as a consultant to the Board and the colleges.

As noted earlier, Superintendent McCunn did not interfere in the selection of faculty. However, he did hire what were termed program coordinators, a combination teacher and administrator, who operated out of the District Office and employed their own teachers, independent of the two campus presidents. On paper, these were District employees who bypassed Sullivan and reported to the college presidents. This was in theory only, however, because they actually reported directly to the superintendent. They headed up such programs as Distributive Education, Family Life Education, Fire Education, Police Education, and Supervisory Training.

Sometimes these coordinators taught in their special field, but they more often secured special teaching credentials for practitioners in the field and then coordinated and supervised their work. This structure was not without merit, but it contributed to confused responsibility for campus administrators and resentment by lower-paid regular faculty, and was seen by some as McCunn’s determination to foster District preeminence at the expense of campus autonomy. Perhaps the same message had been signaled earlier when McCunn secured Board endorsement of the whole District being called Contra Costa County Junior College, with the two colleges designated as West Campus and East Campus and the two presidents given the lesser title of director, not president.

Bob Faul, who served the District throughout McCunn's tenure, takes a less critical view regarding the use of District coordinators and the role of the superintendent with regard to the campus directors (now college presidents). Faul points out that prior to 1950, most junior colleges were a part of a unified or secondary school system. McCunn himself came out of the Pasadena Unified District, where the head of the junior college was called director. Faul writes: "As I see it in review, the Contra Costa District was established under a legal framework that detailed certain titles and approaches to organization. McCunn brought in what he knew and was familiar with. This, to me, became the ultimate heart of the problem. McCunn saw the District as the important, key ingredient. He put the coordinators in to effect this; a common practice in K-12 (e.g., music coordinator, art coordinator, manual training coordinator, etc.). This might have worked except he did delegate to Graham (Sullivan) and the campuses the selection of personnel. This may have been 'the fatal cup of tea.' Campus staffs were not, in the main, from K-12 districts. They came from other JCs, the university and state colleges. They came with different hopes and expectations. They tended to be collegial in philosophy and behavior. This is what they knew from their background experiences and observation. This created an inevitable confrontation. As I think about it, I find it interesting that many of the faculty who came out of K-12 tended to support the superintendent. Of course, there were a few notable exceptions."

Building a Campus

WHILE IT IS OFTEN SAID that a college resides in the minds of its staff, on a practical level there needs to be a *place* for students to be. This translates into classrooms, offices, laboratories, shops, gyms, playing fields, scientific paraphernalia, machines, equipment, and so on. When a college with all these material things is created in a two- or three-month period, as were West Campus and East Campus, it is inevitable that the college will start with make-do facilities. West Campus started in the old Kaiser Shipyard #3 in Richmond, and East Campus started in an abandoned grammar school in Martinez. Each felt lucky that it got what it got, but neither got much.

Board member Elton Brombacher came up with the idea to use the U.S. Maritime Commission buildings, the World War II shipyard in Richmond. He enlisted the help of Congressman George P. Miller; General Philip P. Fleming, chairman of the U.S. Maritime Commission; and Contra Costa County's own Assemblyman George Miller, Jr. They coordinated their collective political clout and within weeks had rented three buildings with 178,500 square feet of usable space. A total of 198 rooms included space for administrative offices, classrooms, a library, laboratories, seven vocational shops, physical education facilities, and a cafeteria. The monthly rent for all of this was \$675. In addition, they sweet-talked the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, the Richfield Oil Company, the Richmond Housing Authority, the Richmond Redevelopment Agency, and again, the U.S. Maritime Commission into providing further athletic and parking facilities, in most cases rent free. During this period, Sullivan and Porterfield negotiated with Superintendent Helms to take over part of the Richmond schools adult education program and the shops and classrooms in which it was housed.

The fact is, the Board was almost too successful in providing adequate quarters. As the saying goes, "There is nothing so permanent as a temporary building." West Campus didn't move to its permanent site until 1956, and even then was housed in temporary buildings, some of them discarded by the San Pablo School District. During this six-year period, the Board may have called the college, Contra Costa Junior College—West Campus, but it was known affectionately to the students, staff, and public as "Shipyard Tech." (Not all staff agree with the "tech" designation, pointing out that West Campus was from the beginning and remains to this day a comprehensive college.) West Campus opened in February 1950 with 500 students, and by September, registration had doubled to 1,000 students. East Campus, now Diablo Valley College (DVC), had its first home in Martinez, largely because there was an architecturally charming, albeit decrepit, old grammar school available. Sullivan, Medsker, Buffington, and Drexel, as had been the case at West Campus the previous semester, hired staff and put together a credible college in about three months. In September 1950, despite the outbreak of the Korean War, East Campus enrolled 350 students.

But the District's very first classes, offered in September 1949, were held in two old army classrooms at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, some 25

years before Los Medanos College, the third of the District colleges, offered classes in its striking new building on the same site. These early classes, which were taught in the evening primarily by local high school teachers, were standard academic courses that needed only a classroom with chairs and a blackboard. Because there was an available teacher named Walter Sharafonvich, a class in Russian was included.

McCunn's "Pay-as-you-go" Policy

SUPERINTENDENT McCUNN ESTABLISHED a reputation as a canny fiscal manager by loudly and frequently proclaiming a "pay-as-you-go" policy. Some observers were certain the Board members sincerely shared belief in this cautious and conservative route and others believed they simply made necessity into a virtue. The Board members, all of them savvy politicians, sensed the direction of the political wind, knew how to count, and remembered that the District was formed by a 53 to 47 percent vote, with only 10 percent of the electorate voting. They also knew that victory in a bond election required a two-thirds majority, and the chance of getting that margin before the colleges had established solid reputations was dim, indeed. Time proved them correct, for even after McCunn was gone and the colleges' reputations were without blemish, three bond elections went down to defeat between 1965 and 1968.

The pay-as-you-go policy did not condemn the District to be a renter forever. In 1947-48, the assessed valuation of taxable property in Contra Costa County was \$223,752,000, and the Board had the legal power to set the tax rate at or below 35 cents per \$100. With this healthy assessed valuation, they did not need excessive rates to quickly finance a building fund. The colleges had barely moved into their temporary quarters before the search was on to find sites for permanent campuses.

The Board started the site selection for the East Campus first because its little elementary school would be outgrown faster than the much more spacious Shipyard #3 used by West Campus. They appointed a search committee made up of three realtors, C.A. "Cappy" Ricks of Martinez, Barney Gilbert of Walnut Creek, and Ellis C. Patterson of Oakley, plus landscape

architect Howard Gilkey. Together they worked out these selection criteria: (1) nearness to the center of population; (2) accessibility to highways and secondary roads; (3) natural features such as drainage, topography, wind protection, soil, usable area, beauty, and wholesomeness or insularity; and (4) cost of the property as well as cost of utilities, drainage, and grading. The committee surveyed some 22 possible sites and narrowed the selection to the Roche property on Golf Club Road, west of Concord; the Brown ranch on Withers Road, in Pleasant Hill; and the Cardinet property and the Wheeler property, both in Walnut Creek. The Board considered the merits of all four options and decided on the Roche property. On November 2, 1950, only two months after the East Campus opened, the 114-acre Roche parcel was purchased for \$172,509. The usual procedure of condemnation was started but proved unnecessary. Board President and lawyer George Gordon went into extensive negotiations with Gordon Turner, the attorney representing the Roche family, and soon all the points of difference were worked out in an amicable fashion.

Planning for the architectural use of this site began immediately. George Gordon said: “It might be well to point out that the master plan for the East Campus was developed by John Warneke. As you will recall, he is the same person whose firm designed the John F. Kennedy Memorial at the Arlington Cemetery. It was Harry Nakahara who designed the first permanent building at Contra Costa College—East Campus (the so-called Library building with the top floor classrooms and the first floor Library). Nakahara was originally in Warneke’s office but at the time we hired him he was on his own” [“Contra Costa Junior College District’s Historical and Administrative Development,” by Robert E. Stoker]. Fred Confer/John Warneke, a joint architectural venture, developed the master plan that was presented to the Board on September 26, 1951. Two years later, in November 1953, the upper floor of the unfinished Nakahara building was occupied. This, plus a

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number of World War II vintage Quonset huts (purchased at no cost from the University of California), a couple of “Butler” buildings, and a former chief petty officers club moved from the Naval Weapons Station in Port Chicago, comprised the classroom, physical education, cafeteria, library, and lab facilities for the new campus (now DVC).

Superintendent McCunn’s frequent nautical boast was “this District is going to go first cabin.” Throughout the first half of the 1950s, the grum-

The low point came in fall 1953, when enrollment exceeded classroom space and the problem was solved by erecting huge circus tents and subdividing them into separate classrooms with canvas flaps. The effect, of course, was a cacophony of voices with the decibel level raised further by the roar of small airplanes taking off and landing at nearby Buchanan Air Field.

bling faculty turned this boast into a jibe. Everyone was happy to be on the beautiful, oak-studded rolling knolls of the East Campus’s permanent site, but the temporary facilities were hardly “first cabin,” and those who got classrooms on the upper floor of the Nakahara building wished they were back in their temporary quarters when sawing, hammering, swearing, and other construction noises were going on below them. The low point came in fall 1953, when enrollment exceeded classroom space and the problem was solved by erecting huge circus tents and subdividing them into separate classrooms with canvas flaps. The effect, of course, was a cacophony of voices with the decibel level raised further by the roar of small airplanes taking off and landing at nearby Buchanan Air Field. It was not until 1956 that the campus began to take shape and the beauty of the present DVC campus could be foreseen.

At West Campus (now Contra Costa College), the search for a permanent site got off to a much slower start. The shipyards, plus the acquired rentals, gave plenty of room even if they, too, were not “first cabin.” The lease on the maritime buildings was scheduled to run out in June 1956, so the Board, in order to have sufficient lead time for building a new campus, instructed McCunn to start the search in Febru-

ary 1952. Luckily for the pay-as-you-go policy, there was an unused 47-acre parcel, El Portal Park, owned by the federal government. Public Law 152 did allow, under certain circumstances, the granting of unused federal land to state educational institutions. The formal request was made, and again with the able assistance of Congressman George P. Miller, the federal government awarded a quitclaim deed, dated April 13, 1953, for the purpose of establishing a permanent site for the West Campus. The total bill for the acreage was the cost for a final survey of the land. In 1954, an adjacent 32 acres was acquired for \$100,000, making a campus total of 79 acres that spanned the border between two communities, Richmond and San Pablo, with the Hayward earthquake fault running straight through the center.

The master plan for West Campus, developed by John Lyon Reid, was accepted by the Board in July 1956. In the meantime, previously condemned elementary school buildings had been secured from the San Pablo School District and moved to the newly acquired site. These structures, coupled with a complex of temporary administrative offices constructed on the site, constituted West Campus, until its first permanent structure, the Humanities and Science Building, was completed. The building had already been started by June 30, 1956, the expiration date of the shipyard lease, and Shipyard Tech quickly became history, replaced by the Contra Costa Junior College—West Campus in its new home. As with East Campus, it took many more years to substitute permanent buildings for the temporary quarters, but now, despite the earthquake fault, a lovely campus stands on the site.

Prior to the acquisition of either campus site, the superintendent and the Board started a search for a District headquarters. They wanted it located in Martinez because it was the county seat, harboring both the county courthouse and the offices of the county superintendent of schools. At the time, the superintendent's office was the paymaster for the District and was assisting in other administrative capacities. The Robert Barlund residence, which stood across the street from the courthouse, was available for \$12,500, so the District bought it and spent a few more thousand dollars on remodeling (the previous tenant had been a palmist). In January 1950, the District staff moved from temporary offices in the James Hotel on Main Street in Martinez to its new headquarters at 1005 Escobar Street. At the time, the staff was made up of McCunn, Sullivan, Drayton Nuttall (administrative assis-

tant), Dr. Wayne McIntire (administrative assistant), Mrs. Isabel Sargeant (secretary to the superintendent), and Mrs. Murray (secretary to Graham Sullivan). Later, when McCunn hired the District coordinators and added the first public relations person, Bob Davidson, the staff quickly outgrew its quarters. In May 1955, to accommodate the growing numbers, the Board authorized the purchase of the adjacent property, owned by the Fothergill family. After extensive remodeling, the building, which housed the boardroom and offices for additional staff, served the District for a number of years.

2

CHAPTER



Jean Knox was a longtime faculty member at Contra Costa College.

Memories of the Early Days at West Contra Costa Junior College

Jean Knox

Jean Knox came to West Contra Costa Junior College soon after it opened, and during her long career, she became one of the college's most respected instructors. She conveys the sense of the excitement of working at a brand-new college without many of the limiting preconceptions usually found at what she calls "mature" schools. Part of that excitement came from the

eclectic backgrounds of the faculty, who were brought together for the endeavor. Another aspect of this new institution was the nontraditional student population; even in those early days, not all students at the community college fit the stereotype of what Chet Case calls, “American Graffiti youth culture.” We meet two such challenging but rewarding students in Knox’s account. Finally, we see the growing tension between the collegial tradition of governance, represented here by the first director (president), John Porterfield, and the top-down management of Drummond “Juggernaut” McCunn, as Knox calls him.

THE FIRST FULL ACADEMIC YEAR (1950–51) was a propitious time for the launch of a community college in West Contra Costa County, defined in the college attendance area as Kensington on the south to Crockett on the north. The City of Richmond had proudly dubbed itself the City with a Purple Heart in recognition of the hectic years of World War II when the population, fed largely by the influx of workers answering the call of Kaiser Shipyards, had swollen from 23,000 to more than 100,000 within a year.

By 1950, many of these workers had been laid off but were still full of the drive and hope that had brought them west. They came from all over America, but particularly from the rural south, to turn out Liberty and Victory ships at the rate of a ship every two days until the end of the war. Contra Costa Junior College–West Campus (CCJCW), the official name of the new college, was temporarily housed in the Kaiser administration building of Shipyard 3 at the end of Canal Boulevard. It was a magnet for many of the newly jobless residents of Richmond.

There’s a nice symmetry in the fact that the workers could return to the scene of their war-effort jobs to seek new opportunity in a college whose mantra was “meet the needs.” These needs included training and retraining, remedial prep for a four-year degree, lifelong learning, and parent education—a perfect fit for a nontraditional student body. Granted, many of the students coming to the college in those early years were the traditional graduates from the five high schools within the CCJCW attendance district who were simply looking for a “junior” college where they could

complete lower-division courses at home before taking on the expense of tuition, room, and board at a four-year institution. However, it was the broader mission of a curriculum based on students' needs that dominated policy discussions and informed the startup faculty what we were all about (or should be about).

A large percentage of registrants were what we then called nontraditional students, not 17- and 18-year-olds fresh out of high school, but students of all ages: returning veterans, women who had worked in the shipyards and wanted ongoing careers outside the home, Asian immigrants.

These widely diverse nontraditional students, by the way, are the traditional students of virtually all community colleges in the country today, even those like Pasadena Junior College, which hang on to the outdated name. Many of those who flocked to CCJCW were southerners—whites as well as African Americans—whose education had been limited to a few elementary grades, if even that much, but whose wartime work had confirmed their abilities and fired their ambitions.

The Co-op Child Care Center just down Canal Boulevard from the main classroom building met the needs of many ex-Rosie the Riveters who wanted to, and in many cases had to, work outside the home. The Rosie the Riveter monument in the recently established Home Front National Park at Marina Bay, Richmond, which was the site of all three of the wartime Kaiser shipyards, tells the story of these women's entry into good-paying jobs during the war and explains their motivation to remain well trained and well employed afterward by enhancing their education at CCJCW.

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Diverse Student Body

MANY MEN AND A FEW WOMEN, taking advantage of the GI Bill and living with their young families in the wartime housing along Cutting Boulevard, added to the diversity of the student body, as did a few East Asians who made their way to the West Coast because of service they provided to U.S. forces fighting in the South Pacific. I remember one such student, Toha Dula, vividly. By playing dead, he had survived the massacre of prisoners in a Japanese prison camp somewhere in the Pacific and then made his way to a nearby Marine camp, where he was given medical aid and sanctuary. He became a bat man (servant, to put a finer point on it) to an officer who admired his spirit and ingenuity and somehow secured for him the papers necessary to immigrate to California. I first met Dula in a remedial English class. (He had a lot to learn, but learned fast!) At that time, he was enrolled in the auto repair program. I hired him to help us lay a patio in our small back yard. He assured me that he could excavate the site in a day. Knowing his history of hard labor, I was pretty confident that he could. The day he finished the job, he offered to cook barbeque chicken Indonesian style if I had some peanut butter, vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic on hand. That was our introduction in 1952 to chicken satay, which many years later became a staple of trendy cuisine. Perhaps Dula did work as an auto mechanic. I don't know. But ultimately, he started a small janitorial business, married, and raised a family.

I won't put a name to another nontraditional student, but he will be recognized by many people in Richmond who knew him in the '40s, '50s, '60s, and later. "George" was an important and influential minister in North Richmond, leader of a very large and active congregation. He was a justifiably proud man, very aware of the problems of the times confronting his African American flock. (He would not have used that term, nor probably its predecessor, black. "Negro" was then the word.) George urged the young people in his congregation to go to college, and he set a good example by enrolling himself. I can remember seeing him arrive at the parking lot that lay between the front of the building and the border of the shipping canal that paralleled the site. He drove a Cadillac, wore

well-tailored suits at all times, and sported a weighty diamond ring on his left hand. He was a presence! He opted to enroll in a speed-reading class taught by my colleague Sterlyn Steele, himself an avid reader who was forever trying to read his way out of a predicament: “so many books, so little time.” After a few class meetings, Sterlyn realized that George wasn’t picking up on the techniques of speed reading he was demonstrating because George couldn’t read at all. His perfectly adequate oral vocabulary had masked this fact. Sterlyn conducted the class in such a way that George’s initial illiteracy was never revealed to his classmates, but he did suggest that George come to his office hours for special tutoring. George’s experience and intelligence were, of course, such that he quickly learned to read. He completed the course, went on to an AA degree, and from there to a theological seminary from which he graduated. This was a memorable case of “meeting the needs.”

It was a heady time with a newly assembled faculty, free of the institutional conflicts that are inevitable in a “mature” school system. A prime contributor to those halcyon days was Director (the title is now President) John Porterfield, a leader in sync with the expansive ideals of a *community* college and sincerely respectful of the faculty. My English Department colleague Robert Pence remembers being astounded by one of Porterfield’s early talks with the faculty. As Pence recalls, J.P. said, “Those who carry out a policy should participate in its formulation.” Whether Porterfield added that this is basic democratic theory, Pence doesn’t recall. However, having had several years of experience teaching at a nearby “mature” community college, he vividly remembers being impressed by Porterfield’s creed. Democracy in an administration? How heartening!

Although the faculty was not, alas, ethnically or racially diverse, it was professionally diverse. Significant numbers had come into teaching from alternative careers and widely different university backgrounds: Charles Lovy, refugee by way of Shanghai from Nazi Germany and a graduate of the Sorbonne; Berta Kamm and Otto Barrett, two more who escaped the Nazis; and numerous World War II veterans. Others were newly credentialed teachers (at the time a junior college credential was a requirement for employment) who brought the energy and idealism of youth to the job.

Helen Kocher, one of my colleagues in the English Department who came from a Washington, D.C., position with the War Labor Board, observed, “I think whoever did the hiring here must have an unconscious dislike of teachers. Look at us; we don’t fit the teacher stereotype at all.” This admittedly smug remark indicates the degree of camaraderie that existed in the original faculty and survived for some years.

Tough Working Conditions?

ALTHOUGH A STRONG MAJORITY of faculty members at CCJCW had joined the American Federation of Teachers—many were encouraged when Board trustee Bert Coffey, himself a former labor organizer, signaled his approval—our focus was not on the nitty gritty of working conditions (perhaps it should have been). Instead, we were true believers in the mission and took on assignments that by current standards were very heavy loads. Bob Pence remembers teaching 19 units, which generated hours of paper reading at the same time his role as a journalism instructor entailed public relations duties on the side.

My initial load was 18 units assigned just a week before classes began, much too late to select textbooks. Because one of my courses was Introduction to English Literature and no anthologies were on hand in the bookstore, I remember the time-consuming chore of typing mimeograph stencils of *The Canterbury Tales* and often having to run copies myself the day before class because I had not been able to get them to the production lab on deadline. In our department, at least, I don’t remember a lot of grumbling—just an intense degree of involvement and enthusiastic commitment. We worked outside the regular teaching day on numerous faculty committees, sometimes staying on for evening meetings after dinner at the Sea Shell restaurant on the corner of Cutting and Canal. Porterfield’s principle—those who carry out a policy should participate in its formulation—demanded a lot of time but we were energized.

Throughout the spring semester of the first year of the college, one of the numerous faculty committees was asked to develop a policy for grading and

incompletes. I don't recall the details of the recommendations we finally submitted to the District Office. They were doubtless forgiving, designed to "meet the needs." However, I do vividly recall that when we returned for the fall semester, the adopted policy bore little relation to our recommendations and our work was nowhere acknowledged. That was the beginning of the disillusionment that began to set in as it became apparent that District Superintendent (the title is now Chancellor) Drummond J. McCunn did not share Porterfield's collegial instincts. As we were to learn, he was alarmingly unsympathetic to principles of academic freedom and his antipathy to labor unions was toxic.

At the time, McCarthyism was at its most virulent. McCunn used the atmosphere of suspicion and the California loyalty oath requirement of the Levering Act to get rid of three union leaders in 1952 and 1953. He did it before any faculty members had achieved tenure and, therefore, were not protected by dismissal-for-cause. One of this trio, Morris Tepping, served part time as college registrar. The official reason for his dismissal was that he refused to compel his staff to work overtime without pay when it was discovered that the average daily attendance was threatened by tardy attendance reporting in the Central Office. John Schuyten, a geologist who had been recruited to the faculty to develop courses related to the local refining industry, was called to testify before the state equivalent of the Un-American Activities Committee, and was fired simply on the strength of having been called and, of course, having taken the Fifth Amendment. (His wife Inez, a tenured teacher in the Richmond Elementary School District, was also fired from her job. They had both belonged to an organization that supported Spanish loyalists against Franco. Inez recovered her position and back pay in court and John founded a small and very successful steel company in Berkeley.) Stan Jacobs, the last of the instructors targeted by McCunn, was fired in 1953; the official reason was that he had declined a team-teaching assignment outside his academic field.

In the same year, John Porterfield was terminated as director and transferred to Contra Costa Junior College—East (soon to be renamed Diablo Valley College) where he returned happily, and I understand successfully, to his career as a history teacher.

Surviving the Purge

THE COLLAPSE OF MORALE in 1953 left wounds still felt. At the same time, it generated enduring bonds of solidarity among those who survived the purge and stayed on to “meet the needs,” including their own need to protect academic freedom. Joseph Cosand, who succeeded Porterfield as college director, proved himself able to cool one case of witch hunting fever. A Board member became alarmed when he saw *The Communist Manifesto* on the reading list for a Great Books course being offered in the evening program, and proposed that if the book could not be banned, at least all classroom discussions had to be recorded and reviewed by the administration. Director Cosand called in Charles Lovy and Bob Pence, who shared the teaching assignment, and assured them that no classroom discussions would ever be recorded while he was director of the college. None were.

The collapse of morale in 1953 left wounds still felt. At the same time, it generated enduring bonds of solidarity among those who survived the purge and stayed on to “meet the needs,” including their own need to protect academic freedom.

Drummond J. McCunn—we called him Drummond “Juggernaut” McCunn—loomed, sometimes quite literally, over the faculty until January 1962. I remember a faculty meeting in the Cafeteria building on Canal Boulevard when he stood on a slightly raised platform, leaned on a music stand as a lectern that looked ready to buckle under his considerable weight, and swayed precariously as he laid down some edict about curriculum, probably driven by his fear that some courses were dangerously “socialistic.” This may have been during the time that he was virtually salivating at the thought that the faculty would need to gear up for another war effort. He was

confident that anyone could teach anything with just a little notice—blue printing, welding, pipe fitting.

After Joseph Welch faced down Joseph McCarthy during the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954, McCunn’s position with the Board of Trustees began to erode. In a speech reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on

December 7, 1961, he proudly announced his membership in the John Birch Society, claimed that other districts besides his own “teach communism,” and declared the United Nations’ support for worldwide education to be un-American because schooling is a national responsibility. At the May 28, 1962 Board meeting, by a vote of 4 to 1 on the motion of trustee William Kretzmer following a three-hour executive session, McCunn was dismissed (with three years remaining on his contract).

Eventually, Karl Drexel succeeded him as chancellor (not superintendent) of the District. The names of the colleges had by then been changed to the now familiar and truncated Contra Costa College and Diablo Valley College in the Contra Costa Community College District.

3

C H A P T E R



Drummond C. McCunn, the first superintendent
(1949–1962)

“Education Is My Business . . .” —The Stormy Tenure of the First Superintendent

Beatrice Green Taines

The firing of Drummond J. McCunn, the first superintendent of the Contra Costa Community College District (District), was a defining moment for the District and helped establish patterns and expectations that continue to this day. This pivotal event took place in May 1962, 13 years after he was hired in 1949. In 1967, Beatrice Green Taines, an English instructor at Diablo Valley College (DVC), wrote an account of the tumultuous six months that preceded the firing.

From the earliest days of the District, the superintendent had been ill-matched with those who came to make their careers here. An old-fashioned administrator in business services from a K-12 background, McCunn had clashed repeatedly with faculty, staff, students, and managers during his tenure. The conflict had the effect of uniting a majority of those who made up these groups in opposition to him and his policies. During the years McCunn served, 34 administrators left, many of them citing his interference and demeaning treatment.

The discontent first came to a head in 1959, when, at the urging of the faculty, the California Teachers Association investigated conditions in the District and recommended to the Governing Board that McCunn be replaced. The Board, however, refused to act on the report and voiced its support for the superintendent.

In December 1961, all this changed when the superintendent held a press conference prior to speaking at a meeting of the California Association of School Administrators on the subject of "Teaching about Communism in Our Schools." The explosive charges that McCunn leveled about the subversive nature of textbooks and teachers in the junior colleges set off a firestorm of press coverage that would blaze for the next six months. As Taines points out, right-wing attacks on public schools are not uncommon, but "this is the only public school in California, and probably anywhere, which has been accused of being socialistic by its own chief administrator." The battle over the superintendent was fought in the pages of the local press and focused on political questions, although the issues of most importance to the colleges had nothing to do with socialism or the John Birch Society. Taines's edited account, its title taken from a wonderfully ambiguous statement by McCunn, concentrates on that press coverage.

WHEN ASKED TO NAME either textbooks, teachers, or school districts where Communist infiltration has been successful, McCunn declined to do so by saying, "Education is my business, not security" [Richmond Independent, December 7, 1957].

Drummond McCunn became a well-known public figure throughout the entire Bay Area on December 7, 1961, when almost every area news-

paper carried a story announcing that he had praised the John Birch Society and had stated that many school texts were “slanted to socialism.” He had made the statements a day earlier at a press conference that preceded a meeting of the California Association of School Administrators at which he was to speak on “Teaching about Communism in Our Schools.” All the newspapers were careful to point out that McCunn had “commended” the John Birch Society for “exposing the communist conspiracy,” and that he specifically said he did not endorse the society and that he did not belong to it himself.

On the issue of the textbooks, McCunn was widely quoted as saying, “Some of the textbooks I have read are definitely slanted toward socialism,” and others “wash out history.” When asked to name specific textbooks that illustrated the former charge, he refused on the grounds that he did not have documentation before him. The *Concord Transcript* quoted him as having said, “I would like to cooperate, but I don’t want to be guilty with a lot of other people who are making wild and careless statements against the California school system.” He went on to describe socialism as “one step away from communism.”

As an example of a text that “washed out history,” McCunn cited a two-volume history titled *The United States to 1865*, by Michael Kraus, a professor at City College of New York and a Guggenheim Fellow, and Foster Rhea Dulles, a history professor at Ohio State University, former State Department lecturer, and former correspondent for the *New York Tribune* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Of this book, McCunn said, “The history fails to quote Farragut’s ‘Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead’ at the battle of Mobile Bay in 1864. Such vital omissions as this and the deletion of the dying words of Nathan Hale constitute shabby treatment for our national heroes.” However, McCunn acknowledged that the text was not used in California schools.

Another widely quoted statement he made during the same press conference was that music is a particularly dangerous area of the curriculum. He objected to the song “Swing the Shining Sickle” by saying, “You drip, drip through the hammer and sickle, etc.—the words of Lenin” [*Daily Transcript*, December 7, 1961]. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that when he was informed that the song was written in 1897 to celebrate the Ameri-

can harvest at Thanksgiving time, McCunn laughed and replied, “You tripped me up. Maybe I’ve been brainwashed against that song.” However, the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Richmond Independent* both reported that his response to this information was that, “It was well for everyone to realize the communist infiltration started ‘back at the turn of the century.’”

The Press Conference

IN HIS SPEECH before the school administrators, McCunn proposed that programs be developed on the local level to combat communism. But the speech itself received bare mention in newspaper articles. Most of the coverage directly after the event and in the subsequent months was focused on the statements McCunn made during the press conference. The day after the press conference, the *Richmond Independent* published an exclusive interview with McCunn in which he enlarged on the statements he had already made. The story’s page-one headline read “McCunn Says: He Sees Socialist Leanings in Staff,” and began, “There are teachers in the Contra Costa Junior College District who support socialistic ideals, Dr. Drummond J. McCunn, District superintendent, said today. ‘There are some—a few—of the teachers in this junior college district that support degrees of socialism. The unfortunate thing is that their beliefs do not come out into the open until they have tenure in the system. Having a socialistic viewpoint is not a cause for dismissal under California’s education code,’ McCunn added. ‘This does not mean that I do not support the teacher tenure concept,’ he interjected, ‘I’m all for it.’”

The response to McCunn’s statements was immediate and heated. Fifteen teachers at Diablo Valley College, all of them members of the American Association of University Professors, spoke up first. They issued a joint statement “disassociating” themselves from the pro-Birch remarks made by Superintendent McCunn, stating that they “in no sense represent either the attitudes or the point of view of the teachers.”

McCunn responded to their rebuke by stating, “All I know about it is what I have been told and what I read in a San Francisco newspaper this morning.” He went on to say, “The views expressed by me were my personal

views, and were not concerned with the operation of the school district.” While acknowledging that the teachers had a right to petition against him, McCunn further stated, “My only request of these 15 signers is that they redouble their efforts to comply with the State Education Code, a section of which states: ‘Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, and patriotism, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, to instruct them in the principles of free government, and to train them up to a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship’” [*Oakland Tribune*, December 8, 1961].

However, the teachers continued to object. At the next meeting of the District Board, the president of the Contra Costa College Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers and the president of the Diablo Valley College (DVC) Faculty Association each presented a statement requesting clarification of the position McCunn had taken during the press conference [*Contra Costa Times*, December 12, 1961].

DVC students were the next group to speak out on the controversy. Three hundred of them signed a petition asking the superintendent to attend an open assembly at the college to explain his views. Again, the action was based on newspaper reports, with one of the student spokesmen stating: “We are not saying we agree or disagree with the newspaper reports of the statement, and there are no judgments behind the petition. But it brings up questions on policy.” The Student Council voted to endorse the petition and composed a cover letter for it, asking, “how much the superintendent’s personal beliefs enter into choosing textbooks, hiring of instructors, and otherwise affecting the type of our education” [*Oakland Tribune*, December 12, 1961].

Newspapers began editorializing on the subject. On December 10, the *Contra Costa Times*, in an editorial titled “McCunn Bites Bathtub Barracuda,” observed, “It’s easy to be against communism. That’s like saying you are against [a] barracuda in the bathtub. But saying you are for something like the John Birchers is another matter.”

Despite the uproar, the Junior College District Board at its next meeting refused to act on the public’s demands to admonish Superintendent McCunn for his statement commending the John Birch Society. At the meeting, McCunn repeated his support of the earlier press statement, saying, “In

no way do I apologize for my stand in the support of the American way of life—or for my stand that I support every red-blooded American, his groups and his organizations that are dedicated to expose the communist conspiracy. This is my belief.” Board President William J. Kretzmer commented that

Despite the uproar, the Junior College District Board at its next meeting refused to act on the public’s demands to admonish Superintendent McCunn for his statement commending the John Birch Society.

McCunn was speaking for himself and not as a representative of the District: “The John Birch Society is of little or no value to a fine democratic society, but Doctor McCunn is entitled to hold his own beliefs and speaks as a free individual. If he has any legitimate charges to make against teachers or textbooks, he should make them during a Board meeting.”

Kretzmer invited the other three Board members present at the meeting to make any comments of their own, but George R. Gordon of Martinez, Harmon Howard of Orinda, and Glenn Clemetson of Richmond declined to speak. Then Kretzmer stated, on behalf of the Board, that it did not wish to serve as a censor and remarked that “employment in the district is not dependent on any belief or philosophy” [*Concord Daily Transcript*, December 12, 1961].

This was the first of many extremely crowded meetings the Board was to experience, after years of meetings at which no member of the public was present. Approximately 150 people attended, including teachers from both colleges and others prominent in community organizations. Following Kretzmer’s statement on the Board’s position, the meeting became a parade of speakers debating the merits of the John Birch Society and either supporting or condemning McCunn for his position on the organization [*Concord Daily Transcript*, December 12, 1961].

The subject was not closed by the Board’s action, or rather inaction. All the newspapers in the area received large numbers of letters to the editor. These ranged in view from, “What a wonderful thing for our country that we have such an honorable man as Mr. Drummond McCunn of Contra Costa County” [*Oakland Tribune*] to, “With respect to Doctor McCunn, I

therefore suggest that since he has exposed himself for what he is, he should be turned out to pasture, there to bray to his heart's content, but not in the halls of learning where he is an offense to the sensibilities of intelligent men" [*Contra Costa Times*].

On December 20, organized labor got involved when the AFL-CIO County Central Labor Council passed a resolution asking the District Board to state publicly that "the extremist views of the John Birch Society are not the views of the two junior colleges in Contra Costa County," and to officially disassociate itself from the superintendent's praise of the society [*Contra Costa Gazette*, December 21, 1961].

The next meeting of the Junior College Board attracted 400 people. They were described as a "partisan crowd" by almost all the newspapers, and they demanded to be heard. But, the Board declared that the issue of the superintendent was a personnel problem and should therefore be handled in executive session. However, it did promise the union representatives that their resolution would be considered at its next meeting. Interestingly, most of the newspapers headed their stories on the meeting with similar language. For example, the article in the *Antioch Ledger* was titled "Fireworks Fizzle at DVC Trustees' Meet," and the *Daily Transcript* announced "Fireworks Fizzle on McCunn Issue." The *Oakland Tribune* headlined its article "Junior College Board Ducks Birch Issue," and its lead sentence began, "Expected fireworks failed to materialize last night . . ." [All citations from January 9, 1962].

Textbook Reevaluation Issue

ANOTHER ISSUE RAISED at the January 8 meeting was McCunn's recommendation that all textbooks in the college be reevaluated before the start of the fall semester. President Kretzmer objected to this, saying that the current method for textbook evaluation by instructors and administrators was the most practical. However, the other Board members showed their usual approval of McCunn's requests and approved the recommendation by a vote of three to one, with Kretzmer dissenting [*Pittsburg Post-Dispatch*, January 9, 1962].

The situation came to a head when the faculties of the two colleges openly demanded McCunn's dismissal, and the newspapers published their resolutions. The Contra Costa College (CCC) faculty declared:

The people of Contra Costa County have created a junior college, and its purpose, as that of all schools, is to promote effective teaching in a democratic environment. The faculty of Contra Costa College (by a vote of 55 to 18 with four abstentions) considers that the present superintendent has not ensured an effective educational climate, with the result that year after year the colleges of this district have been involved in disrupting and demoralizing crises climaxing in the current dilemma.

At this time the greatest service that our School Board and the people of this county can perform for the Junior College District is to insist that our superintendent be replaced. Otherwise the district will face the prospect of a future with a superintendent who has lost the trust of the faculty, and whose qualifications are other than those required of leaders in education [*Contra Costa Times*, January 5, 1962].

The DVC faculty resolution of no confidence in the superintendent was equally adamant:

Recent charges by Superintendent McCunn of adherence to socialistic principles by unnamed faculty members and unnamed textbooks have placed the faculty in a deplorable light and bring discredit in the community to the Junior College District.

The charges were made in the press and not through proper channels, where the superintendent would have had to act responsibly, producing verifiable evidence and following recognized professional procedures.

This most recent action is the culmination of a history of crisis and conflict within the Junior College, stemming from the superintendent's attitude and behavior here again exhibited [*Daily Transcript*, January 10, 1962].

On January 10, Drummond McCunn spoke to 800 students at DVC at a special meeting called in response to the student request for clarification

of his December remarks. This meeting, too, received wide press coverage, with columns of type devoted to a description of the meeting and the various subjects discussed. The articles were followed by numerous editorials and letters to the editor in practically every area newspaper, including those in Berkeley and Oakland. Even the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which did not give wide coverage to Contra Costa events, devoted many column inches and four photos to the event.

At the 90-minute meeting, McCunn continued his earlier support of the John Birch Society as a group fighting communism, and equated the American way of life and free enterprise with an absolutely capitalistic system. He devoted considerable time to the support of private utility companies, pointing out the amount of taxes paid by Pacific Gas and Electric Company in Contra Costa County and how much of that revenue went to the junior college. He concluded by saying, "When public power wins, you lose." [*Contra Costa Times*, January 12, 1962].

The superintendent distributed to the assembled students a map from the National Economic Council, which was headed by Merwin K. Hart, a John Birch Society chapter head. Several newspapers pointed out that the council had been described by a congressional committee on lobbying activities as anti-Semitic. The map showed that "under world government, California would be policed by Irish troops." McCunn said that when the Irish troops came, he could change one letter in his name and become an Irish Catholic instead of a Scotch Presbyterian. The superintendent also announced a donation to the school library of three copies of a report by the Veritas Foundation, which said Harvard University was a source of communist influence in American education. Finally, he urged the students to take home programs for the School of Anti-Communism, to be held in Oakland by the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade headed by Dr. Fred Schwarz of Australia, and commended the school as "an educational institution" [*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 1962]. (Dr. Schwarz was an Australian physician and political activist who founded the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade.)

“Slipping on the Shoe of Guilt”

MORE RELEVANT TO THE ISSUES at hand were McCunn’s replies to several requests that he identify the textbooks and teachers he claimed were socialistic. He refused to discuss the texts on the grounds that the Board of Governors of the District had voted to survey all texts before the next school year, stating that it would be unfair to “name any of the books or the authors until the survey is complete and the new list compiled.” With regard to teachers, he made only the cryptic comment that those teachers who objected to his press conference statements might be “slipping on the shoe of guilt” [*Pleasant Hill Sun*, January 12, 1962].

The student meeting produced another new shock for the community. One of McCunn’s replies to a question resulted in a banner headline on the front page of the June 12 *Contra Costa Times*: “McCunn won’t say whether he commends Hitler, Nazis.” On the same day, the *Pleasant Hill Sun* headlined its story “McCunn Withholds Views for/against Fascism.” Both headlines were initiated by a written question at the meeting: “You have commended the John Birch Society because of its anticommunism. Do you say that any organization that is anticommunist is worthy of commendation? The American Nazi Party is anticommunist and so was Hitler. Do you, then, commend the Nazi Party, Hitler, and Mussolini?” The *Contra Costa Times* report, which also appeared in abbreviated form in other newspapers, described the incident this way: “McCunn said he had no comment but would secure documentation. ‘You should have nothing but the truth,’ he said. After the meeting, McCunn was asked by reporters if he wished to make himself clearer. He said, ‘No.’ He was asked if he needed documentation for the fact that there was a second World War, and that Adolph Hitler was responsible for the death of millions. He was asked if he still did not wish to say if he approved or disapproved of Hitler. He said he had no comment.”

This meeting, even more than the others, generated a tremendous public response. The following day almost all newspapers devoted their editorials to the McCunn issue. The *Oakland Tribune*’s editorial started with the statement, “Attacks upon Doctor Drummond J. McCunn, Superintendent of the Contra Costa Junior College, have reached the point of hysterical persecution and should be halted.” The *Contra Costa Times* editorial stated,

“Doctor Drummond McCunn is mouthing extremism which is an insult to the people of this county. In allowing him to do so, the Contra Costa Junior College Board violates the trust placed in it by the electorate” [both quotations from January 12, 1962]. The letters to the editor columns in several newspapers were devoted exclusively to the issue, sometimes displacing favorite columnists and other features because of the acute interest in the junior college problem. These letters also expressed either extreme support or equally extreme disapproval. There seemed to be no moderates when it came to Drummond McCunn. Here are just three excerpts from those letters: “We are grateful that a man of Doctor McCunn’s stature and impeccable character is the Superintendent of our Junior College District” [*Pleasant Hill Sun*, January 12, 1962]. “Many of us are far more concerned about the lethal damage which is being done by individuals of the type of Doctor McCunn in high places, and worse, the lethal damage done by those fanatics whom he professes to admire” [*Oakland Tribune*, January 12, 1962]. “None of the charges would be or could be backed up with facts, a behavior reminiscent of the days of McCarthy” [*Contra Costa Times*, January 12, 1962].

The one note of humor in the entire, lengthy controversy was injected by Art Hoppe, a satirical columnist writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on January 14, 1962. He stated: “Personally, I thought Doctor McCunn’s timely warning about the Irish danger should be taken seriously. As seriously as any of the others. . . .”

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would have to take this right to the top, all the way up to President Ken— Good Lord! Doctor McCunn’s timely warning is right! Only it’s approximately one hundred years too late.”

On January 15, 1962, the Governing Board of the District held a personnel meeting for five hours. The newspapers all carried fairly extensive stories speculating on the outcome of the meeting and listing the number of resolutions the Board would have to consider in its executive session. However, the next day, the Board announced that it would have no comment or announce any decision after its executive session. Board President Kretzmer stated only that the group might hold another personnel meeting later in the same week, and that it would consider the resolutions from the Labor Council at its next regular meeting. During this time, newspapers began reporting that the faculty was likely to request an investigation of college problems [*Contra Costa Times*, January 14, 1962; *Antioch Ledger*, January 15 and 16, 1962; *Oakland Tribune*, January 15 and 16, 1962; *Contra Costa Gazette*, January 16, 1962; *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 15, 1962].

On January 19, the Board held a second executive session on “personnel matters.” It had an additional item to consider at the meeting: a letter from approximately 200 students at Contra Costa College asking for McCunn’s removal. In addition, the Board was presented with a case of vandalism at Contra Costa College, during which several buildings were defaced with signs expressing opposition to the superintendent.

Press announcements on the next Board meeting used such phrases as “Mounting tensions in the countywide Contra Costa Junior College District may reach a climax when the District’s governing board meets” [*Oakland Tribune*, January 21, 1962]. The January 22 meeting of the Board was held in the gymnasium of Contra Costa College in order to accommodate the 650 people who turned out to hear the proceedings. The Board listened to presentations by the chairman of the Central Labor Council, the presidents of the teachers’ organizations, the attorneys for teachers’ organizations, individual instructors, supporters of the superintendent, a representative of the School of Anti-Communism, and many others. (An interesting aspect of the statements by the teachers was that almost all of them mentioned the extensive publicity the colleges were receiving as the result of McCunn’s behavior. The presentation made by the president of the Contra Costa

County chapter of the American Federation of Teachers consisted mainly of a summary of 19 newspaper articles that had been published in the preceding six weeks, and the question, “Is this the manner in which we wish our district to be known?”)

In the end, the Board refused to take any decisive action on its own, and instead requested an investigation of the colleges by an impartial group. The Personnel Practices Commission of the California Teachers Association was selected to conduct the inquiry. It included members from associations of state school administrators and school boards and from the Western College Association and California Junior College Association. The Board voted to make its request through the California Association of School Administrators, of which McCunn had once been president.

The following day, newspapers carried front-page banner headlines announcing the Board’s decision and devoted many column inches to a full description of the meeting, often giving verbatim accounts of some of the exchanges. The *Contra Costa Times* then announced it would stop publishing readers’ letters on the McCunn issue. The newspaper explained that it felt that the large number it had received most recently had not added anything new to the story, and that continuing to print so many letters would “deprive our readers of the normal news and feature content of this publication.” However, other newspapers continued to print many letters on the McCunn controversy for the next several weeks. And the papers weren’t the only ones getting mail. Kretzmer announced on February 22 that since the controversy arose in December, he had received “thousands of letters and phone calls” on the subject [*Oakland Tribune*, February 27, 1962].

The Investigation Begins

THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE began its work on March 5, and the group announced that it would hear anyone in the colleges and in the community at large who wished to be heard. At this point, a number of groups began attacking the California Teachers Association, with the Parents Committee for Civic Responsibility calling it “a political oligarchy” and accusing

it of bias and a desire to “[take] over the policy-making duties of district boards.” Another newly formed group, Taxpayers-Parents Association for Better Education, recommended that private consulting firms be called in [*Oakland Tribune*, February 27, 1962].

These opponents of the California Teachers Association received strong support in a letter from one of the charter members of the Junior College Board during an earlier California Teachers Association investigation: George R. Gordon had written in 1959 that the activities of the group were “undemocratic,” and the District Board had rejected the findings of the California Teachers Association at that time [*Pleasant Hill Sun*, January 26, 1962]. Nonetheless, the Board decided to go ahead with its current decision. Superintendent McCunn, however, immediately stated his refusal to participate in the investigation. He stayed with that decision throughout, despite numerous newspaper articles stating that the probers “hoped” he would meet with the panel and “McCunn may show at [the] probe” [*Contra Costa Times* and *Oakland Tribune*, March 7, 1962].

At this point, Drummond McCunn did an amazing thing. He called a press conference, despite the difficulties that had resulted from his first press conference. Stories on what he had announced ran the next day, a symbolically significant date: on Friday, March 13, the *Walnut Creek Sun* carried the five-column banner headline “‘Bad’ Textbooks May Cost Junior College District \$1 Million.” McCunn stated that the District was in danger of losing the \$1 million in state aid to education during the coming school year because several of the textbooks used in United States history and government courses were in violation of the State Education Code. “The state can withhold this money. The district is receiving about \$800,000 in state aid this year,” said McCunn. “I have received an informal opinion from a proper source in this matter,” he added.

The books the superintendent objected to were *The Primer of Freudian Psychology* and two novels, *The Uprooted* and *Catcher in the Rye*, which he claimed were used as textbooks in U.S. history courses at the junior colleges. A discussion of his statements at the next Board meeting revealed that they actually were used in two social science courses at DVC.

At the April 23 Board meeting, the superintendent and Kretzmer engaged in an extended debate on the subject of the March 13 news con-

ference. Kretzmer expressed dismay that McCunn had not informed the Board of the danger of losing state funds before informing the newspapers. Kretzmer reported that after reading the article, he had checked with counsel for the State Department of Education, with Assemblyman John Knox, and with the state attorney general. “All the authorities he checked, Kretzmer told the Board, reported they had never heard of the matter and knew nothing about the possibility of the Junior College District losing funds for bad textbooks” [*Antioch Ledger*, April 24, 1962].

McCunn urged the Board to “take a good, hard look” at the textbooks used in the social science classes. The report on the meeting continued: “Kretzmer then said to McCunn, point blank, ‘I want to know if this district is in danger of losing state aid.’ McCunn answered, ‘Noncompliance always poses a danger of losing state funds.’ ‘I’d like to assure the public the district is operating 100 percent legally and is not in danger of losing funds,’ Kretzmer said. “McCunn replied he did not say the district would lose state funds, but that the funds would be ‘jeopardized.’ Whereupon Kretzmer again asked McCunn a direct question, ‘Is it your opinion we are operating in violation of the Education Code?’ This time McCunn again referred to taking a ‘hard look’ at the 11 social science books, and replied, ‘I feel we are not in full compliance.’ Kretzmer said, ‘I feel it was incumbent upon you to notify the Board, . . .’ and McCunn answered, ‘I have several times’” [*Antioch Ledger*, April 24, 1962].

The superintendent appeared at the next Board meeting with a panel of four people whom he termed “experts on textbooks” to discuss the 11 texts in use in the social science courses. The four people he chose—none of whom was a teacher or in any way associated with education—were George Crocker, a San Francisco attorney and businessman who was well known in area right-wing activities; George Mardikian, owner of the Omar Khayyam Armenian restaurant in San Francisco and a popular speaker on the subject of what emigrating to the United States meant to him; Mrs. Lillian Wilt, a 75-year-old housewife from the town of Benicia in a neighboring county, who was described as a “student of American education, particularly of textbooks, for 30 years”; and Frank Iszak, who had fled Hungary during the revolt of 1956 and had become an active participant in anticommunist activities. Each panelist had prepared a 25-minute presenta-

tion and was ready to answer questions, so that the discussion would have required a minimum of two hours [*Contra Costa Times*, May 16, 1962].

The Board voted not to hear the discussion, to which the superintendent expressed disappointment and great surprise. Kretzmer reported that he had investigated the superintendent's charges since the last meeting and stated, "I am satisfied that there is no imminent loss in state funds. Therefore, I wrote to the superintendent last week, withdrawing my request that the item be placed on the agenda." Other Board members supported the rejection of the discussion of texts on the grounds that all texts would be evaluated and that singling out these particular ones would serve no useful purpose. Board member George Gordon stated, "The texts in use were adopted by the Board upon recommendation of the superintendent. The semester is almost over, so it is useless to delve into it now." However, when the matter was brought to a vote, two members voted to hear the panel, which meant the panel was dismissed by a vote of only three to two.

Although the Board refused to listen to McCunn's speakers, other members of the audience did hear them. They adjourned to one of the classrooms and listened for three hours to emotional attacks on the 11 textbooks in use in the social science courses.

Campaign Against Diablo Valley College Teacher

DURING THESE SAME MONTHS, another campaign, this one in the form of "public pressure," was being conducted against an English teacher. At the December 11, 1962, meeting of the College Board, and again at the meeting on January 8, several audience members appeared with copies of a textbook titled *The Shape of English*. The book, a mimeographed collection of discussions and exercises on the communication process, had been written by Richard Worthen, an English teacher at Diablo Valley College (DVC). It had been in use for several years in the required freshman composition course, and had recently been revised for continued use. This was one of the texts to which, it was believed, McCunn objected, although he never

identified it by name. After the January 8 meeting, Worthen charged that McCunn had “staged” an audience protest to the textbook, although the superintendent knew that Worthen had withdrawn the text from use by campus classes on November 23 [*Contra Costa Times*, January 10, 1962]. Worthen declared that McCunn had taken 90 copies of the book from the college bookstore in order to distribute them to his supporters. At the January 10 meeting with the students, McCunn was asked whether he had bought multiple copies of the book, and his response was a flat denial [*Pleasant Hill Sun*, January 12, 1962].

The press deliberately intervened in this part of the controversy on January 14, when the *San Francisco Chronicle* published a copy of the charge slip from the DVC College bookstore showing that Drummond McCunn had indeed signed for 90 copies of *The Shape of English*. Several other newspapers followed the *Chronicle* lead and also printed reproductions of the sales slip.

McCunn’s response to this exposure was to say that he did not purchase the books. He insisted he had merely signed for them and taken them out “on consignment” for deposit in the District offices, where members of the public might examine them [*Daily Transcript*, January 15, 1962]. In an interview with a *Contra Costa Times* reporter, McCunn was quoted as saying, “I don’t know if there were 90 books—they were packaged. I have been distributing this book to interested citizens since 1959,” he said. “I have been trying to get this book out of the curriculum since 1959” [*Contra Costa Times*, January 15, 1962].

A number of groups were formed, some in support and others in opposition to the position taken by the superintendent on the Worthen book, and several events were sponsored to strengthen the views held by the members of the respective groups. These activities attracted considerable numbers of people. However, it must be remembered that Contra Costa County had a population of almost 450,000 in 1962, and only a miniscule percentage ever actually attended any of these events.

On March 23, an organization calling itself Parents and Taxpayers Associated for Better Education held a testimonial dinner to honor Superintendent McCunn. Edward S. Carmick, a retired Navy admiral and a professor of engineering at San Jose State College, was the main

attraction, speaking on “We Must Win on the Vital Front of American Education.” Over 700 people attended the dinner and heard a former member of the College Board say, “It will be a sad day for this county and education if he [McCunn] ever decides to leave.” They also heard the superintendent refer to the seventh investigation being conducted during his tenure over disagreements with faculty members on a number of issues, saying, “I have no fear of being investigated. I’ve just begun to fight” [*Oakland Tribune*, March 25, 1962].

Another group, Friends of the Junior College, attempted a public education program on the role of the junior college. It was described in the *Contra Costa Gazette* as “an informal organization interested in the success of the junior college as an educational institution and the proper conduct of it, without becoming involved in determining the right and wrong of the present controversy.” At a meeting of the group on March 2, Dr. Richard Barnes Kennan, secretary of the Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities of the National Education Association, spoke on “Who Are the Enemies of Education?” In his speech, Dr. Kennan stated directly that the John Birch Society was the biggest single source of attacks on America’s public education system [*Walnut Kernel*, March 8, 1962].

On May 18, the DVC Faculty Association hosted “Symposium ’62: What Makes a College Good?,” a dinner meeting that was actually a gathering of the anti-McCunn forces. The speakers were Martin Trow, professor of sociology and a member of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of California; Keith Merrill, assistant director of the Office of Relations with Schools of the University of California; and William Kretzmer, president of the Contra Costa Junior College District Governing Board. The moderator was John Porterfield, an instructor in social sciences at DVC, one of the original members of the faculty and an outspoken opponent of the superintendent. Both outside speakers supported the position taken by the faculty in its controversy with McCunn. Trow commented, “While teachers . . . understand the constraints of organization, it is a wise administrator who realizes that his institution rests in the hands of the faculty.” And Merrill stated that the faculty should have a communicative function, that is, the transmittal of ideas to the administration and Board [*Contra Costa Times*, May 21, 1962].

The most ambitious and unusual response to the McCunn controversy was the one taken by the teachers at both colleges, who formed the Contra Costa Colleges' Faculty Committee for Academic Responsibility. The committee, which cut across the lines of all existing faculty organizations in both schools, was a voluntary group formed exclusively to oppose the superintendency of Drummond McCunn and to protect the teachers from attacks being made by him and his supporters. The teachers who joined taxed themselves \$25 or \$30, payable over a three-month period, in order to retain an attorney to represent them before the Board. The attorney the teachers chose was Bert Levit, a former state official, a 10-year member of the San Francisco School Board, and an attorney who was considered an expert on educational matters [*Walnut Kernel*, June 14 and 21, 1962]. Levit's principal advice to his clients was that "they should not reply in kind to the strictures of the superintendent; and that the matter was not properly one for public debate but rather should be handled through professional educational channels in general and through the Board of Education in particular." In a letter addressed to the Board on April, 18, 1962, after the superintendent had made his charges about the "bad" textbooks, Levit stated:

One wonders why, if these charges have any substance, the Superintendent does not enforce correction through his power and authority as Chief Executive of the district, or at least bring them before the governing board in ways more appropriate than statements to the press.

I must assume that sooner or later the latest charges will be the subject of a Board meeting, and when that time comes I should like this letter to be considered as a respectful request from me to have an opportunity to present to the Board the position of my clients that the charges are baseless, except to the extent that they demonstrate the unfitness of the Superintendent to superintend the affairs of the district.

I trust that the continued silence of the major portion of the faculties will not be considered in any light other than that they have been advised by me to remain aloof from the shadow-boxing exhibition being put on by the Superintendent. I feel sure that the Board will, in good time, protect both the good name of the district and the good reputation of its teachers.

When *Look* magazine devoted its September 25, 1962, issue exclusively to the State of California, it included one section on the far right, which was a description of the controversy at the Contra Costa Junior College District. In this essay, Levit is quoted as stating that the superintendent's statements and actions were bringing out "from under the rocks the lunatic extremist fringes of the right and of the left" and creating "a kind of community hysteria."

Investigative Panel Report

ON MAY 17, 1962, the long-awaited report from the investigating panel was presented to the Junior College District Board. Every newspaper in the Bay Area devoted many column inches to extensive summaries of the report, with most giving it front-page mention. The *Daily Transcript* published it above the masthead; the *Pittsburg Post-Dispatch* and the *Antioch Ledger* gave it an eight-column banner headline on page one; and most newspapers, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*, subsequently devoted editorials to the report, taking a position either supporting or opposing its recommendations.

The principal recommendation made by the panel was that McCunn should resign from his position. The most succinct summary of the report appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 19, reproduced here in part:

McCunn's unhappy relationships with the junior college faculties in his district, as well as with their students, gained a public focus late [last] year when he publicly commended the John Birch Society "for its exposing of communism." The investigating educators found, however, that "his views regarding the John Birch Society are not the main problems at issue in the district." The report said these views "have served merely to focus attention on matters of real concern to the district's staff and board. . . ."

The hearing was conducted by seven representatives from the California Association of School Administrators, California Junior College Association, California School Boards Association, and California

Teachers Association. They took testimony from 130 volunteer witnesses, including leaders of industry, labor, members of the clergy, and teachers and former administrators who stated they quit the district because of McCunn's conduct.

The sweeping report included charges such as:

- McCunn refers to teachers as “hired hands” and in more derogatory language.
- McCunn does not understand the concept of free inquiry.
- He sometimes read a newspaper while administrators were presenting problems and similarly was “disrespectful and discourteous.”
- He directed two students’ F grades changed.
- He expressed prejudice against “certain religious and racial minority groups.”
- He “questioned the loyalty and integrity of his instructors.”
- On his own, without knowledge of the trustees, he ran a security check on new teachers through a private San Francisco firm.
- He “apparently is incapable of . . . dealing with abstractions.”
- He has “scathingly rebuked faculty members . . . before the entire faculty.”
- He has tried to keep instructors away from board meetings, telling them, “you can talk to any board member about anything you want—as long as it is about the weather.”
- He used pressure groups for support at board meetings.
- He pressed personal views on students. For example, the report said, he handed them copies of a circular from an organization whose objectives were “often an ill-concealed anti-Semitism.”
- At one student meeting, at least, he was “evasive, guilty of doubletalk and . . . a discredit to his high office.”
- The educators also questioned the superintendent’s “consistent use of district resources and personnel on district time” to further favorite causes.

The report said district personnel were assigned to typing and mailing out literature promoting a 1960 anti-communist school. It asserted that “although the paper was not purchased from district funds, stamps were

used. . . .” Hearing of this last night, Contra Costa District Attorney John A. Nejedly sent for a copy of the report. He said he will study it and, if he feels it is warranted, will investigate whether there has been any misuse of public funds.

The report also was sharply critical of the district’s trustees during the thirteen years of McCunn’s incumbency. It said the board was “grossly remiss” by allowing the problems to have reached the critical state in which the district found itself as recently as two years ago.

McCunn’s only response to the report was brief: “I did not choose to speak to the panel, and I do not choose to speak now. I will wait for the board to speak to me.”

While most of the local newspapers praised the report as a sensible, forthright statement whose recommendations should be followed, the *Walnut Kernel* expressed strong opposition to it. A four-column editorial entitled “College Probers Fail Miserably” started a campaign on May 24. In the piece, which attacked the report, the teachers who opposed McCunn, the Board president, and the California Teachers Association, the editor raised a number of issues that were to reappear in further attempts to downgrade the report:

The strange statement is made that the superintendent for many years has been “the focal point of district problems.” It would be strange if it were otherwise. As district superintendent, he should be the focal point. That’s his job. The new report has no minority report. All seven panelists “agreed on everything,” a most rare phenomenon among educators and school board men to say the least. . . . Obviously, no reasonable group of seven men could expect McCunn to resign under such conditions unless he had not a shred of manhood left. The sacrifice asked of him is that he publicly repudiate his lifelong professional career, label himself a failure and as incompetent to hold the position he has had for 13 years.

The *Kernel* devoted almost three entire pages of its May 31 issue to the colleges. It reprinted the original editorial, published the entire report verbatim, and then added a second editorial titled “Why All the Secrecy, Mr. Kretzmer, in Firing of McCunn?” This one claimed that there were “no

real facts” to support the dismissal of McCunn, and went on to state that the entire controversy was actually a Machiavellian plot:

The Diablo Valley College “saviors” have been active in politics, Democratic party politics. . . . There is nothing wrong in this, but there came a time when they wanted to be paid off. The payoff—McCunn’s job. Somehow, they convinced Sen. George Miller, the strongest politician in the county, that McCunn’s ouster was the panacea to all the college dist.’s problems. . . . Having decided that McCunn must go, Miller waited until the right time. When McCunn made his famous Bircher remark in San Francisco, the opportunity was apparent. Kretzmer had already been convinced, as had George Gordon, one-time strong McCunn supporter. Undoubtedly political considerations were involved in convincing them that McCunn’s ouster was necessary. Another strong McCunn supporter, O.G. Wohlgemuth, had resigned from the board. Trustee Glenn Clemmetson [*sic*] and Fred Abbott could be led, thru their concern for the college’s overall welfare, to vote for ouster of McCunn as the “easy” solution. Teacher’s assn. at Diablo Valley College knew that any new investigation would be handled, in reality, by California Teacher’s assn., already committed against McCunn. Kretzmer apparently knew this, but did not tell the other board members who naively voted for the investigation to be made thru California assn. of School Administrators. After it was too late, they realized that while the panel would be different, the consultants would all be CTA men, representing a point of view which would make it impossible for McCunn to get a fair hearing. Knowing this, McCunn refused to testify before the panel. This seemed to convince the panel that McCunn was afraid to testify, so they decided that the viewpoint of the Diablo Valley faculty assn., so carefully presented, must be the correct one.¹

¹ At no time during the six months of controversy about the District did State Senator George Miller make any public statement at all about the issue. Nor was he ever referred to by any other newspaper. Stylistic singularities in the *Kernel* story, such as the use of abbreviations and omission of articles, are characteristic of all *Walnut Kernel* copy.

The Board Announces Its Decision

THE DISTRICT BOARD SPENT three and one-half hours in executive session discussing the report with its seven authors. The following week, the Board held a five-hour executive session, first receiving legal advice from the district attorney, and then spending three hours with McCunn and his attorney. No comment was issued after either of these meetings on what transpired. Richard Sanders, the attorney for the superintendent, made the only statement: "My client will take no action on his own. As I said, it's now up to the board." This was interpreted by the newspapers as a refusal by McCunn to resign.

On May 28, the District Board held a three-part marathon meeting that lasted for over five hours. During the first part of the meeting, at which routine business was conducted and Superintendent McCunn presented the preliminary budget for the coming year, the Board listened to members of the public speaking on the subject of the report. The audience of over 600 heard from the chairman of the Parents Committee for Civic Responsibility, who urged the Board to reject the report. "Dr. McCunn is entitled to a fair and impartial investigation," she stated. "The CTA can't be impartial." The vice president of the Taxpayers and Parents Associated for Better Education called the report "completely biased." The *Oakland Tribune* editorialized in its news column: "Perhaps the most dramatic moment of the meeting came when B.O. Wilson, who retired in 1959 after 26 years as Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, made an unexpected appearance before the board and defended the panel" [*Oakland Tribune*, May 29, 1962].

"They [the panelists] have a high level of professional integrity," the *Contra Costa Times* quoted Wilson as saying. "It is unfortunate the public has been given the impression their integrity is in question" [*Contra Costa Times*, May 30, 1962].

Representatives of the faculty associations also appeared to push for putting into effect the report's recommendations. Finally, a letter signed by 200 local citizens employed in the fields of engineering, law, medicine, education, and religion strongly advocated for support of the report. It urged the Board to adopt the recommendations of the Personnel Standards Commission, especially the recommendation to replace the superintendent, stating in part: "Mr.

McCunn's administration of the junior colleges has created chaos and fear where there should be harmony and freedom. There is no compromise with Mr. McCunn and his extremist adherents. We urge that you follow the recommendations of the investigating panel" [*Daily Transcript*, May 25, 1962].

Following the presentations, the Board went into a three-hour executive session. When this session was completed, the public meeting was reconvened—the third part of the marathon—with approximately 300 audience members who had sat through the long evening.

The Board announced its decision to dismiss Superintendent Drummond J. McCunn. President Kretzmer addressed the audience, saying, "I have an announcement at this time, and it is indeed a difficult thing I have to do. The Board has passed a resolution whereby the contract of Doctor McCunn is terminated June 30, 1962, in the best interests of the district. Doctor McCunn will be notified in writing later. The motion adopting the resolution was made by me and seconded by Mr. Clemetson. The vote was four 'ayes': Mr. Abbott, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Clemetson, and myself. There was one 'no' vote by Mr. Howard. Doctor McCunn and his attorney were advised of this action by the board" [*Contra Costa Times*, May 30, 1962].

Thus ended the most bizarre six-month period in the life of this or probably any school system.

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Questions of Influence

EVERYONE CONCERNED WITH THE CONTROVERSY repeatedly disclaimed being influenced by the political opinions expressed by McCunn. The investigating

panel members, the teachers, and his opponents in the general public all specifically denied that McCunn's support of the John Birch Society was the cause of their objections to him. The Board declared that it did not fire him because of his pro-Birch statements. These avowals are probably truthful. Nonetheless, the sequence of events shows that if he had not "commended" the John Birch Society, it is most likely that McCunn would not have been dismissed. It was the December 6 press conference that changed the entire atmosphere in the District, suddenly clarified relationships and attitudes that had long existed, and revealed to the public, and more importantly, to the Board, the anti-intellectualism of the man who headed the county's only public school of higher education.

The story does not end with the firing of the superintendent. The previous year, the Board had signed a four-year contract retaining McCunn at a salary of \$20,000 per year, and \$60,000 was still due on the contract. This issue was resolved out of court for \$40,000 [*Contra Costa Times*, March 29, 1964].

During the two-year period in which the cost of the contract was still in effect, the District operated without a superintendent. Each college director was responsible for his own school and reported directly to the Board. McCunn's \$1 million libel suit against the authors of the report, which resulted in his dismissal, is still pending. [Note: Drummond McCunn has since passed away. His lawsuit was never settled.]

Following the firing of the superintendent, his supporters undertook a number of activities to express their displeasure with the Board. One of them was to start recall action against the four Board members who had voted to dismiss him [*Pittsburg Post-Dispatch*, May 31, 1962]. Another was to send telegrams to the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Senate Internal Security Committee, and the California Burns Committee, asking for an investigation of "alleged subversive activities in the district." The author of the telegrams refused to specify which activities were subversive or in what way: "I would like to bypass the question at this time, because I don't want anything conflicting with information to the [Congressional] committees," he said [*Contra Costa Gazette*, May 31, 1962]. The same groups also set in motion a write-in campaign to elect McCunn county superintendent of schools. McCunn, however, declined the campaign, with thanks, and nothing further

was heard of the recall campaign or of the House on Un-American Activities Committee investigation [*Oakland Tribune*, June 1, 1962].

“It will be years before the heartbreak and anger aroused by the McCunn case will be forgotten in Contra Costa County,” commented *Look* magazine [*Look* magazine, 26:20 (September 25, 1962) pp. 65–70]. This has proved true. The failure of two successive bond issue elections for the District most likely is one manifestation of this prophecy. The issue of the first superintendent has been raised in every election for trustees of the District since 1962, and writers of letters to the editors still have not forgotten. Nonetheless, the colleges have been more stable since June 30, 1962. Operations proceed more smoothly, requests cause less controversy, and teachers feel more secure and confident in their position. Most conspicuously, the number and quality of cultural events offered by the colleges to their students and their communities have increased enormously, based on this writer’s personal observations as a member of the community, of the college, and of the Committee on Arts and Lectures.

The focus of the two colleges today is definitely education and not politics—and not the John Birch Society.

4

C H A P T E R



Karl Drexel, then Diablo Valley College dean of student personnel, registers students Harry Neil McCallum, Paula Putnam and Marianne Furlong, 1953.

Developing Leadership Under Fire: An Interview with John Porterfield and Karl Drexel

Ruth Sutter

Two of the most important leaders in the history of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) were John Porterfield and Karl Drexel. Porterfield was the first director of the West Campus and went on to become a faculty leader at Diablo Valley College (DVC) and a revered elder figure on campus. Karl Drexel began as a counselor and dean of student activities, became the director of the East Campus and then went on to serve as

superintendent of the District. Both individuals developed their leadership style during the turbulent years of the McCunn superintendency. The following was excerpted from an interview with the two men, conducted by Ruth Sutter in 1981. Sutter was a longtime history instructor at DVC who developed the program in oral history.

Ruth Sutter: *What was your first contact with community colleges?*

Karl Drexel: I went to Marin Junior College, and at that time the college was strictly lower division, Letters & Science university parallel. As I recall, we had some technical courses but no vocational courses of any kind. Most of the students intended to transfer to a four-year institution. Some didn't, of course, but that was my first introduction to junior college.

R.S.: *What did you do, then, when you finished at Marin?*

K.D.: I transferred to San Jose State. I stayed at Marin for an extra semester, so that I could play basketball and hopefully get a scholarship to Santa Clara. I missed it by a little, though. They had too many other little guys, so I went to San Jose State on a scholarship. San Jose State didn't have much in the way of scholarships, but they could give you board and room, and that was about it. But, of course, it was a state college, so you really didn't have to have much.

R.S.: *After San Jose, was it your intention to teach?*

K.D.: Yes, I majored in physical education, and stayed there an extra year in order to fulfill all the requirements. So, really, I was five and a half years in college. I enjoyed it so much I could have stayed longer, but my girlfriend, now my wife, insisted that I go to work.

R.S.: *I find it interesting that both you and John started out with the intention to teach but very quickly moved into administration.*

John Porterfield: I didn't move quickly to administration. I guess I became a high school principal about six years after I started, but I put in five or six years of teaching before I did anything in administration.

K.D.: I taught at the junior high school in Martinez for three years, next at the high school for two years; then I went into the Navy, and returned to

teach high school after the service. So, actually, 13 years did pass, but five of those were in the Navy, during World War II.

R.S.: *Martinez was your first job?*

K.D.: Yes, and I had not taught in any other school, except the junior high and high school, until I went to Contra Costa College. I remember John referring to the first college classes being held at Camp Stoneman. I was a high school counselor in 1949 for students going to classes at Stoneman.

J.P.: Why would the high school have a counselor relating to a junior college operation?

K.D.: You know that Drummond McCunn [the first superintendent] was pretty much community oriented. We had one high school counselor from each high school district in the central-eastern end of the county. We were called “community counselors,” and I was the one from Martinez. Liz Johnson [longtime English instructor at DVC] was the one from the Mt. Diablo District. Actually, I was working for the junior college district then in 1949, before it started holding classes in 1950 at Contra Costa College [West Campus]. My job at the high school included English for three hours, athletic director, coaching with Hugh Boschetti [longtime DVC athletic director], and boys’ counselor. I wore a few hats during that two-year period after the war.

R.S.: *What especially interested you about this District?*

K.D.: Well, what interested me most about the junior college was my strong feeling that there were many of us who had the grades to go on to four-year institutions direct from high school, but we didn’t have money. Going to Cal was no big deal, you know. I lived right next to the university and had been going to football games and basketball games and athletic events of all kinds since I was in junior high school. I pledged to a fraternity and all that sort of thing, but at that time the only way I could afford to go was to ride the streetcar from Richmond. I wasn’t about to do that. Living in Kentfield, batching with four or five other guys, sounded a lot more interesting. Away from home and all that sort of bit. But it was really my feeling for the junior college that led me into wanting to be a part of the system—somewhere.

R.S.: *And the prospect of a new district must have been very exciting.*

K.D.: Yes, my early days—that first semester—with John were great. I had an opportunity to stay with him at Contra Costa College. McCunn asked me whether I wanted to stay at West CC or go to East CC. Since I didn't know either Lee Medsker or Reed Buffington, who were coming from Chicago to become president (director at that time) and dean of instruction, respectively, I elected to stay with John.

Then one day, subsequent to that decision, McCunn “unelected” me by a telephone call. His command was, “You’re going to East and get that damned building ready.” And that was my job in the summer of 1950. He had that old elementary school building in Martinez that he had to get ready for fall semester. I frequently referred to myself as the “dean of the latrine” because one of the jobs that I had was to take out all the little potties from the elementary school days. I did everything—the plumbing, the painting, and getting rid of all the elementary school desks. McCunn just turned it over to me and I did everything. In fact, I didn't have purchase orders or Board authorization for anything. I just went ahead and did it all. That was my first assignment.

After that, I had the responsibility for contracting with the company to bring all of the Quonsets from the University of California—they were up at the Lawrence Science Center—to East Contra Costa.

R.S.: *Where did you bring them to? This land [the DVC campus] had not yet been acquired. When was this acquired, and how was it acquired?*

K.D.: I can't tell you when. I don't remember when it was acquired, but this was in 1950, '51, when I was responsible for getting the buildings here. And then, of course, they hired Lou Borghasani from Lafayette. He had the responsibility of putting all the Quonsets together, building the foundations, painting—everything.

J.P.: I remember Drummond saying that he had his eyes on this property for some time; he wanted the college to be in the hills. I remember him quoting the Bible: “I will lift mine eyes into the hills, from whence cometh my strength.” That's where the college was to be. It was to be here; he made that decision, naturally. But it certainly turned out to be a good location

for a college. I don't think anybody—well maybe Drummond did, maybe people did—had any idea of how the area would build up right around the college. But, of course, when the college was first here, there wasn't anything like this degree of build-up around the college. Ruth, what was it like when you came here?

R.S.: *Cornfields in 1964, cornfields and truck gardens, vegetable gardens, no BART, no freeway.*

K.D.: That's right. You know, hindsight's always pretty good, but at that time, at the price, we should have bought a heck of a lot more property than we did. But in those days, a hundred acres for a campus was considered pretty immense.

I don't know whether they ever did any kind of studies of the area, or the potential growth of Contra Costa. But if they had, they were far off target, because there was no expectation at that time of 20,000 students here.

However, there was always a thought that there would be four campuses, one at the east and one at the south, in addition to DVC on this side of the hill. But, on the pay-as-you-go business, that wasn't possible. Another thing in hindsight—though a lot of us did think of it at the time—we should have bought land in the south. We already had the Camp Stoneman area from the government.

R.S.: *How was that acquired?*

K.D.: The government and the Board entered into an agreement, a quitclaim deed to that property. The contract was for 90 acres, long before we ever talked about bond issues. As a matter of fact, we didn't talk about bond issues until I became superintendent. After I became superintendent, I went back to Washington to talk with representatives of the G.S.A. [General Services Administration] to renegotiate the contract, since we only had one year remaining. It was a 10-year lease, so we must have gotten the land in 1953, approximately, and we were supposed to submit building plans. The District did send some stuff back that looked like it had been done in some school drafting class—ridiculous, but they satisfied the purpose at that time. But then came the time when we had

to do something substantial or give it up. We were able to renegotiate the contract for another 10 years with the proviso that we build a college during that time.

J.P.: The government owned all that property. That was all the Camp Stoneman military base, which they used for discharge purposes, I guess. People passed through there on their termination.

K.D.: It was also a holding camp for people going overseas. But the land in South County didn't get any consideration at all. It may have in Board meetings, which we weren't privy to attend.

R.S.: *You say you were not attending Board meetings. And, yet, you had positions of administrative responsibility.*

K.D.: Well, we were asked to stay out of McCunn's "classroom."

J.P.: He was specific about not wanting administrators in the Board meeting, any administrators. No, I guess Graham Sullivan [assistant superintendent] was there.

K.D.: The only way we knew [about] whatever happened was when we read it in the papers, or if we didn't read anything in the papers, why, he'd come around, I guess once a month, and give us a lecture.

R.S.: *So, these were almost secret meetings.*

K.D.: Almost—as far as administrators were concerned, they were. Some faculty members attended, however.

J.P.: Well, the public was never proscribed, kept out of them.

K.D.: Yes, they were public meetings under the Brown Act.

J.P.: They were open meetings; he just didn't want administration messing things up for him. He wanted to speak to the Board.

K.D.: Frequently, he recommended courses of action that were contrary to policy and without previous discussions with *any* administrators—his assistant, Graham Sullivan, or the directors.

R.S.: *Can you give me an example.*

K.D.: There were so many of them, I would have to go back in the District Board minutes to refresh my memory.

J.P.: When did the antagonism or opposition to Drummond first begin to develop? At the beginning, you know, or for a few months, it was all happy stuff, building a big district, everything going great. When did people first begin to [have] reservations?

K.D.: The first semester at Contra Costa College. The first meeting, when he lectured at the faculty meeting. It was the end of the semester. And he regaled the faculty; he said a lot of things that were just not professional. It was at the very beginning of the District. Animosity or a questioning concern continued to develop. Little things began to develop. An example: When Lee Medsker came [to DVC], he came here with a lot of fanfare. He was the first president, I think, of the AAJC [American Association of Junior Colleges], and was really lured out here by Drummond McCunn and others.

In the summer, Lee wanted to finish his doctor's degree. One semester full-time was the prerequisite for any advanced degree at Stanford. Lee and Reed [Buffington, first dean of instruction] planned to use their vacation times and be docked salary if necessary in order to fulfill this requirement. For some perverse reason, Drummond would not allow that to happen. So, those two and I commuted to Stanford that summer in 1951. We were able to get in a full load in the morning, eat our lunch on the way back to Martinez, and be on campus by 1:30. The mornings during that eight-week session represented our vacation time. He did a lot of that sort of thing. So, it wasn't long before people began to wonder what kind of man this McCunn was.

J.P.: I recall a teachers' meeting after that. This was after East Campus [began operating]. Bess Whitcomb [speech and drama instructor at DVC] brought a bunch of you over [to West Campus]. It was a joint party.

K.D.: When Bess put on the play, with Doris Thomas [business instructor] in it? . . .

J.P.: The thing I remember was Bess as "first cabin" [McCunn's frequent boast about the quality of college facilities] and you, Karl, were the stars of the performance! But it was a takeoff, part of it was a takeoff, on Drummond. But it was good-natured. However, at that very meeting, Drummond took the occasion to tell the faculty how the cow ate the cabbage, and you're here to teach; you're not here to do this and do that and the other

thing. Clearly an indication that he considered teachers to be artisans, journeymen; they're to do as they're told.

R.S.: *Let's go back to the beginning of DVC. The move from the Martinez building over to this property occurred when?*

K.D.: 1952, in the summer of '52.

R.S.: *And at that point you had the Quonset huts?*

K.D.: Right. We had Buildings Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven. The twelfth one was the big one. That's where PE classes and plays were held.

R.S.: *There were also the green Army surplus structures here. They weren't the trailers—they came in 1965 or so, I think. These were barrack-like buildings that we used for classrooms.*

J.P.: And they weren't Quonset huts? I had forgotten that.

K.D.: They were former officers' and chiefs' clubs from the Naval Weapons Station in Concord. I brought them to Martinez first. They were our science labs, and then I had the responsibility of getting them over here. They were the chemistry and bio-sci classrooms. They were called, by administration, the Nakahara buildings. They were designed by architect Harry Nakahara. Liz Johnson had her reading lab in one.

J.P.: Well, were you here by the time of the tents?

R.S.: *When did the tents come?*

J.P.: That's when the Library building came, around 1954. When the Library building wasn't finished, we had to go into tents.

K.D.: Yes, that's why we had tents. That was also my job, to get them here. Actually, to open school without that Library building being finished, we had two alternatives: either have classes in buses or tents. My idea was buses (chuckles) and they didn't buy that.

R.S.: *Motorized buses? A college on wheels?*

K.D.: Yeah!

J.P.: You said you came after the tents.

R.S.: *Yes, the tents were a story by then.*

K.D.: [Referring to a feature story in the DVC *Enquirer*] It says the tents were used in 1952. George Gordon [the Board member quoted in the story] is wrong. Tents were not just used for special classes or speakers. They were used for all classes. Just ask anyone who tried to teach in them. It was in 1954.

J.P.: Norris Pope [longtime DVC administrator] might remember. He and I taught in the tents, and I presume he might remember better than I do just what year that was.

R.S.: *But the real point you've made is that the tents were necessary in order to hold classes while the Library building was being completed. That was the first building on campus.*

J.P.: Yes, that was the first permanent building. It didn't fit in with the subsequent architecture at all, did it? They've gone in for all this sort of thing [referring to Faculty Office complex], which makes the Library building [then the current SSC building] seem kind of antiquated. But at the time, it was wonderful; it was the college in those days.

K.D.: Well, that, and that abortion they call the Student Center [the current Cafeteria building].

R.S.: *Karl, what was your position then?*

K.D.: When I was transferred from Contra Costa College, I was assistant dean of student activities.

R.S.: *When was the position of dean of student personnel created, in 1952 or 1953?*

K.D.: Here at DVC? In '52. When we moved to this site. After I had gotten my master's degree, which was a condition that Lee Medsker set.

J.P.: Was it the master's degree that created the position, or was it the fact that we moved to this campus?

K.D.: It was the master's degree. Lee Medsker acted as dean of student personnel prior to my appointment.

R.S.: *Let's talk a little bit about educational philosophy. Were there any real differences in educational philosophy between the two campuses at that time?*

K.D.: What we're talking about with that question is why a junior college is a junior college. Why did we have one? Reed [Buffington, DVC's first dean of instruction] and Lee came with a plan to develop a general education program, and that's what they did. At that time, I guess you weren't talking about general education to the same extent at Contra Costa College as we were at East Campus, were you John?

J.P.: The particular educational philosophy that developed at Contra Costa was, to a considerable extent, a reflection of my own thinking. And I had no background in community college, in junior college. (We didn't even use the term community college then.) My philosophy grew out of my high school experience, which I'd had a considerable amount of on a number of different levels. And I was very much committed to the idea that this ought to be for "Joe Doaks." Definitely, I'd never had an elitist orientation. So, in those general and broad terms, certainly Medsker and Porterfield and I were very much alike. McCunn was also committed to it, and the Board—extremely committed to the idea that we were not to [mirror] the University of California in any kind of way.

R.S.: *And this was Buffington's and Medsker's attitude, too?*

J.P.: They reflected that, but they had had experience in community college and knew a lot of things that I didn't know at all. And that Graham Sullivan [assistant superintendent] didn't know. Sullivan had a lot to do, too, with the development of the philosophy at West Campus [Contra Costa College], but Sullivan's connection with junior colleges had been almost exclusively in vocational, whereas he'd had no experience in general education, certainly as a technical kind of thing. I doubt if he'd ever heard of Earl Johnson, the big general education guy in Chicago. And Medsker and Buffington knew him, and grew out of that philosophy, particularly Buffington. They had a more specific idea of what was meant by general education. And that showed very early in distinctions between the two campuses. But one of the things that got associated with that in the minds of a lot of people was that general education was for gentlemen, and that was not what Medsker and Buffington meant at all. And this got East Campus a reputation as a kind of country club campus.

R.S.: *How did you feel about that, Karl?*

J.P.: I don't think Karl or the folks over here knew this so much. This was the kind of thing we talked about more over at Richmond.

K.D.: You probably were going to say that it was over on the other side of the hills.

J.P.: I doubt if that expression ever got used. It certainly wouldn't have been honored.

R.S.: *So that begins the differences and tensions between these two campuses?*

K.D.: I think so; that's part of it. Well, plus the fact that they brought in the high school continuation classes of Richmond Unified School District. So they got a full-blown vocational program and some technical courses that we couldn't have at all in the first two years because we were housed over in Martinez and didn't have the facilities. As soon as we moved to this campus, we moved into the technical/vocational areas as quickly as facilities permitted. But it's true that not only the philosophy, but the location, the clientele, the whole thing from there to here, was so considerably different that I can understand why we were called the country club. I believed philosophically so much in our general education program, even though I had no experience with it prior to coming to the junior college. I understood it at a gut level, but really didn't when it got down to the development of course descriptions. But, as John says, it was really University of Chicago. The University of Chicago textbooks were used as guides to Social Science 110 and Psychology 110 and Physical Science 110. They reflected the core program at Chicago. GE from there was translated, in a sense, in a good sense. Of course, the faculty that were on board then were really responsible for the development of the courses that were later to become known as the core courses.

J.P.: I think that was only incidentally a mark of distinction between the two campuses. This campus knew what it was talking about when it was talking about general education, and that campus didn't so much. But the tension that you speak of between the two campuses, I think, is more simply a function of the fact that colleges, i.e., curriculums, have almost got to be determined by campuses. I don't know of a district where the district is

unified in feeling about a curriculum. This campus had its own feeling, and that campus had its own feeling, and somehow or other the idea develops that what goes on at one campus isn't the kind of thing you want to do at the other campus. You've got to have your own ball game.

**"But the tension that you speak of between the two campuses, I think, is more simply a function of the fact that colleges, i.e., curriculums, have almost got to be determined by campuses. I don't know of a district where the district is unified in feeling about a curriculum.
—John Porterfield**

K.D.: Well, this is an aside, but it might be interesting to you that the new criteria [GE requirements] established by the state colleges have junior colleges all over the state in a tizzy.

R.S.: *Including this one.*

K.D.: Yes, and you would appreciate the criteria of the state colleges, you coming from the University of Chicago. They're beautiful. There are a number of problems facing the colleges: the redevelopment of courses to meet these criteria; the identification of courses to meet them, if they do; the modification of courses; and that sort

of thing. We were talking about this at Los Medanos College (LMC)—particularly about the physical sciences—and how difficult it is to really meet the criteria being developed at LMC. And the same thing might be true with the natural sciences. At the time, I was thinking of the way we started at East Campus, how *beautiful* those courses were, and the interest students had—it was the first time that they had been exposed to interrelating disciplines. During the LMC discussions, I felt that if we could get our hands on those early outlines and course descriptions, they might be of some help to the faculty at Los Medanos.

R.S.: *Karl, that's a very interesting idea. I think it would be helpful to the faculty here, too, as they puzzle this through. To look at those original outlines might be very useful.*

K.D.: I think they would, at least, give a sense of general education as it was conceived at that time. Of course, the world has changed a great deal, and so have general education concepts.

R.S.: *For sure. We were talking about the question of campus autonomy in a multicollege district a few moments ago. That was an issue when collective bargaining came in, in 1976, and I think it had been an assumption before then.*

J.P.: I think it's the assumption in collective bargaining that any governmental unit is a unit, that it's got to go by district. That is, Chrysler doesn't have one collective bargaining agreement for its plant here and another collective bargaining agreement for its plant there. It's Chrysler, and that's the pattern that's been followed. And so is the District's. And that runs counter to campus autonomy. And I think it constitutes a problem in making this whole collective bargaining kind of thing work.

R.S.: *During those early years, weren't you up against the question of how to evaluate instruction, and what you did with the teacher if you found the teaching inadequate. And the other side of that question, of course, is teachers' rights.*

J.P.: Yes, and that's where the problem with Drummond [became] exacerbated, because Drummond would move with a very heavy hand. Once he made up his mind on a thing, there was no such thing as teachers' rights, there was no such thing as steps you got to go through. If the guy's got to go, he's got to go. And that was one of the things that made it difficult for me on the other campus. Teachers were fired for reasons that today would be totally unacceptable—for political activity on campus.

And that's one of the things that caused trouble for one of the early faculty members at East Campus. There was no due process, at least from his standpoint. And maybe there really wasn't. That was over there, of course, and I don't know much about what actually transpired over there.

R.S.: *What was the Board resolution on political activities of employees? Do you remember?*

K.D.: I think we both do. They had a Board policy that didn't allow for any, any kind of political activity on campus. Which meant simply that

you couldn't wear a campaign button, and you weren't supposed to have stickers on your car, *if* you parked your car in the parking lot at the college. Obviously, you couldn't do any propaganda in the classrooms, which just makes good common sense. But Drummond's concerns were carried out to such an extreme that people were being looked upon as radicals—almost communists. You couldn't use mailboxes for any reason unless it was related to classroom activity.

J.P.: The Hatch Act was very much in operation then. If you remember that, public employees were not permitted to engage in political activity in any way connected with their work. And that's one of the things that is interesting in this connection, that Contra Costa had a different kind of faculty than East Campus had. The faculty at East Campus was more conservative. And I had a good deal to do with that difference personally, I think. It was part of my philosophy, my real belief, that there ought to be a real variety of [points of view]; we're going to talk about college being an agora, a marketplace of ideas. And that there ought to be, really, a variety of thinking. And so I deliberately tried to engage people who were different from my own thinking, for example, [laughter] and we got some real "bastards" over on the West Campus—well, "bastards" certainly, in McCunn's mind, because they wouldn't stay tied, like wild horses. And that became more and more obvious. I was prepared to tolerate that kind of thing. That had been part of the idea. Although, I [have] since thought maybe I'd rather have more people who were like me [chuckles] than we had. So there was that distinction between the two campuses, that East campus was more conservative than West as far as faculty was concerned.

K.D.: There was a way, though, the manner in which Drummond acted. It was a scary sort of thing to start with; it was, as John has pointed out, very heavy-handed. And Leland got to the point where he was really not his own man. To begin with, Leland was a man of principle and a man of integrity. But it got to the point where he was almost afraid to do anything, and he was concerned that if anybody did anything that was a little bit off, the heavy hand was going to come down on him and that person. However, we never really concerned ourselves about politics all that much at East Contra Costa. It was West where, as John points out, the faculty was deliberately violating Board policy. And they did this openly, and the devil take the hindmost.

J.P.: One of the things that I and a number of people at DVC have believed over the years is that the college represented the philosophy of Karl Drexel more than any other person—more than Leland Medsker, more than Reed Buffington. We should explore how Karl feels about the role of administration. I'd like to get into the business of the committee on committees and the general structure of the faculty in relation to administration, and how administration interfaces with the faculty.

K.D.: To go back to my early days in education, I guess I could say I was somewhat of a rebel as a faculty member. My nature has been to stand up for the underdog, the poor guy, and guys not so smart. I always felt that administration in secondary schools left an awful lot to be desired in that regard. I felt they were autocrats. That they weren't very bright. I don't mean intelligence-wise, but they just didn't use common sense. *Their* position was the important thing. I didn't think that they had a philosophy in regard to educational administration. I think it was management, period.

My baptism with John at Contra Costa was a learning experience I'll never forget. Subsequent experiences working with Leland were as rewarding. With those six years behind me, I felt I was in a position to accept a position of leadership that was quite the opposite from my colleagues in secondary schools.

R.S.: *What year was that?*

K.D.: 1956. I knew that I wasn't going to be the kind of administrator that I had seen prior to my coming to the community college. It was such

“My nature has been to stand up for the underdog, the poor guy, and guys not so smart. I always felt that administration in secondary schools left an awful lot to be desired in that regard. I felt they were autocrats. That they weren't very bright. I don't mean intelligence-wise, but they just didn't use common sense. *Their* position was the important thing.”
—Karl Drexel

an eye-opener to be working with John and Leland. I believed in the student, and I believed that every student ought to have an opportunity, and that the faculty ought to give them every opportunity to learn. But I also believed strongly in the faculty, and that administration was to assist the whole operation. Lead, certainly—but the role would be more of a partner in the whole enterprise. To carry that sort of philosophical position forward actually meant bringing the faculty more into administration, to the extent that it was possible. We developed a committee on committees, with faculty concurrence. Every area had a representative on the committee. The committee on committees was really responsible for assisting me in guiding the institution in the sense of how do we perpetuate the philosophy of the college; how do we do this best? Out of these committee discussions, the cluster idea developed. It was out of the clusters that there grew a great deal of—I don't know how to describe it—a feeling of family, a collegial relationship that transcended anything else that we had before. There was no faculty versus administration.

R.S.: *John, was Karl the president when you came to DVC?*

K.D.: I left in 1965 for the position of District superintendent.

R.S.: *That was the period, beginning in the fall of 1965, of rapid expansion in the numbers of faculty members. From the position you then held as superintendent of the District, how did you perceive that expansion, and what kinds of effects did you foresee for growth?*

K.D.: I was so busy with the nuts and bolts and bandages, and that sort of thing, when I first took over that I really didn't give a great deal of consideration to it. I guess my one shot was when Bill Niland and the faculty proposed the division chair idea. I was unalterably opposed to it. Prior to my leaving, I had done a good deal of "research" with colleges—Marin, San Francisco, the old colleges, San Mateo, Santa Rosa—with the division chair concept. I was opposed to it because I felt that it would divide; that there wouldn't be the kind of relations among faculty that there ought to be. There wouldn't be the communication between disciplines that there ought to be. I had an entirely different organization in mind. I was just afraid of what might happen, with growth, that we would become another

university type. Same hang-ups that all divisions have, and departments, in protecting their own ballpark.

R.S.: *Do you think your fears have been realized?*

K.D.: I think to some degree, but I don't know, in hindsight, whether my organizational thoughts would have worked well with the institution growing as fast and as large as this one did. But I do think it might have. The thing I was really most concerned about was the loss of feeling of oneness—once you split the college up into the divisions. That's why I was really sorry to see administration do what they did with Contra Costa College, and invoke that [the imposition of a division structure] almost on top of their desires.

J.P.: I presume it's still true—it certainly was true when I was still here—that the old faculty always referred to the days under Leland and Karl as the good old days. I'm not sure about the extent to which the change from the good old days to the less-good days was a function of the leadership of Medsker and Drexel, and to what extent it was a function of just rapid growth. And very likely they went together, but certainly there was a feeling of mutual confidence and collegiality in the old days that left, that just disappeared into thin air over the years. For instance, this committee on committees that we speak of: Karl designated who would be members of that committee. And yet there was never any feeling—I certainly never detected any—that Karl was using that as a means to perpetuate, to expand his own power. He selected these people. How else would you get them? It was a good idea for him. And then we had the various committees, central committees like the committee on curriculum and the committee on student personnel and the committee on administration. Len Grote, a faculty member, chaired an ad hoc committee on evaluation. The dean of instruction was the chair of the committee on curriculum and the dean of student personnel was the chair of the committee on student personnel, and somebody from administration was the chair of the administration committee. And still there was no feeling that this was just a way of strengthening the arm of administration.

R.S.: *Was the Faculty Association in existence from the very beginning?*

J.P.: Very prominently in existence.

R.S.: *Did they have any procedure for recommending members of these committees?*

J.P.: They weren't interested in it. In fact, the administrators were all members of the Faculty Association. Those distinctions were not prominent in people's minds in those days. And again, why, I think, is an open question with lots of possible reasons. The Faculty Association was never anti-administration.

K.D.: We were small, and it's easy to work with a group of 30 or 40 or 50. When I left there were probably 70 or 75. Anyway, we were still able to meet in classrooms. So it wasn't very large. That's like shooting fish in a barrel, when you compare it with an institution this size.

J.P.: When you became superintendent, there was the whole business of Drummond having his hand in everything, and moving in and taking over faculty meetings and lecturing the faculty. And so there was a strong, heavy-handed kind of centralized administration. And everybody got turned against that—90 or 95 percent of the faculty got turned against that whole style of administration—and finally the Board did as well. Not necessarily against that particular aspect of Drummond, but against Drummond. And for a couple of years there wasn't any superintendent.

K.D.: Three years, 1962 to 1965, Bob Faul of Contra Costa and I were the chief administrators of the District.

R.S.: *What was your feeling about Drummond McCunn when you became president?*

K.D.: He hadn't been interested in my becoming president because he knew I was a maverick, and he would have troubles. And he did.

R.S.: *Was it part of your idea that you might be able to counter some of the things he had been doing?*

K.D.: Very much so. In fact, that's the only reason I did it. I was hopeful that I could be a buffer and could do some things that Leland would not do. He was much more professional than I was. He didn't like that kind of fight. He didn't like any part of Drummond, at the time, and I didn't either. Except that I knew I could get along with him, as long as I could drink martinis with him. I could never keep up with him; I didn't try, either. But

at any rate, it was purely political. And I felt I had an opportunity to save the ship, in a sense. Although I didn't feel like that at the time, like a savior or anything of that nature, I don't mean it that way. It was our best feeling at that time that I ought to take it, and I did.

The same thing happened when it came to the superintendency. Bob Faul had left the year before for Monterey Peninsula College; Buffington was at Chabot. So I was the only one left of that triumvirate. So I assisted in a nationwide search. I went back to New York; I went to Chicago, to visit with well-known junior college administrators— Erickson was one, who later went to College of San Mateo—in an effort to recruit for our District. None of them would touch us with a ten-foot pole.

So then we went into a nationwide search through a committee, a University of California operation. At that point, I didn't want the superintendency. I wanted to stay at DVC. However, when the selection process got to the point where applications came from people I believed would not be good for this District—I knew their administrative history—I began to be concerned. I wasn't too sure that the Board believed that much in campus autonomy and that they just might employ another “manager.” After much talking with John, Lee Medsker, Reed Buffington, Bob Faul, and Dick Worthen, I decided to apply. Both Stanford and Cal recommended me. A UC professor, Dr. Reller, dean of the School of Education, was chairman of the search committee. He, too, had previously recommended me for the position. With those recommendations going for me and with some sense that I might have at least three votes in my favor, I did throw my hat into the ring. I was selected on a three to two vote.

J.P.: I believe that a lot of people agree that the chief impact of Karl's appointment was that he did not move into the operation of the campuses very much. He did sometimes in crisis. Probably the chief thing that most of us who were here, who had been here right along, would say with regard to Karl's administration was that one of the best things he did, in contrast to the McCunn administration, was to keep the Board out of the hair of the teachers. He dealt with the Board, and he didn't do it with the heavy hand kind of thing that Drummond did at all. And the Board learned a good deal from its experience with Drummond. And so the campus was permitted to operate under Bill Niland with Karl there as superintendent pretty much

the way the campus wanted to operate. Karl did not interfere; he did not like, as he's indicated, the division structure idea, but that was Bill's idea and apparently the faculty's idea. They went along with it.

R.S.: *I remember the controversy over that.*

J.P.: It was the Faculty Senate that finally did go along with the idea of the divisions. There was controversy.

R.S.: *That was a split vote, as I recall.*

J.P.: Well, I never felt that Bill *imposed* the division system on the campus. He strongly favored it, but I think he was able to get the votes that were necessary. So it was a campus decision. I don't remember the details on that. But that, probably more than any other one thing, characterized Karl's superintendency from the standpoint of the teacher on this campus. We were able to move ahead, and I believe that Karl had a very great deal to do with making this campus one of the very best places to teach in the whole country. You just did not have that kind of thing, administration pressing down [on] teachers. Bill was not supposed to do that, and Karl didn't make it necessary for him to do it.

R.S.: *You mentioned Bob Faul [director of East Campus] in a number of contexts. What finally happened to him? When did he leave, and why?*

K.D.: Well, we both were told by the Board that we would not be considered as successors to Drummond because we were part of the fight, part of the split. And what the community needed, and what the faculty needed, according to the Board members—at least some of them—was an outsider, who was the only way to heal all of these wounds. It was clearly so stated. That was fine with me because I wasn't interested in the job. Bob was. He made some inquiries, and he had gotten the same message. When the job opened up at Monterey Peninsula College, a superintendent-president of a one-campus situation, he applied and was selected. So he left in 1964; that left one year for us to do the search. And you heard the rest of the story. I was selected in 1965.

R.S.: *One other person I wanted to ask about is George Madison. I never knew him. When did he come, where did he come from, and where did he go?*

K.D.: Well, he came from the District as a coordinator. John has spoken about the number of coordinators we had at the District office. He was a coordinator for business education, I think, or distributive education. [Bob] Nelson had been the distributive, and I don't know whether Nelson was gone then when George came. . . .

J.P.: I think he was gone by the time George came.

K.D.: So he must have taken Bob Nelson's place. Coordinators were tolerated but not accepted by DVC faculty. George, however, was one that was accepted. When time came for the appointment of a dean of instruction, he was appointed by Drummond. I had no voice in the matter. However, I "bought" that one—didn't buy the next one, though. George was great. He was bright. He loved people. He worked well with people. He really was an educator.

J.P.: Karl wouldn't say this, but he was very much like Karl in a lot of respects.

K.D.: And he left to go to law school.

R.S.: *When was that?*

K.D.: McCunn hadn't left when [Phil] Dalby got appointed, so it was 1960 or 1961, I think. Dalby was appointed dean of instruction by Drummond before he was fired. He was a top-flight teacher, one of the very best in music, just outstanding. He preceded Gordon Keddington [longtime DVC music instructor]. He brought Gordon here. Both were tremendous teachers.

At any rate, George Madison went to law school at that time. He died of a heart attack just shortly after he had started practice. In fact, I guess it was his first or second year.

R.S.: *We'll have to stop now, and I thank you both for your interesting conversation.*

5

C H A P T E R



Diablo Valley College's History Told in Myth

Don Mahan

Preceding articles in this volume have described in detail the conflict that accompanied the formation and first decade of the Contra Costa Community College District (District). This thoughtful essay analyzes that period and the subsequent decades of the history of Diablo Valley College (DVC) in terms of traditional myth structures. It outlines the kind of institutional story that several generations of the DVC community have told to explain and emphasize their sense of “specialness.” The author was a longtime instructor in English at the college, in addition to serving a stint as dean of instruction and a historian for the DVC 40th-anniversary volume. Not surprisingly, one of his specialties was teaching a course in mythology.

EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS usually have a story that explains how the organization came into being and what makes it unique. Over the years, such institutional stories tend to coalesce into myth. These institutional tales are generally less concerned with historical factuality than with conveying the special character of the institutions through recognizable mythic structures.

The Diablo Valley College story can be conveyed in terms of four universally understood myth types: (1) creation; (2) our story; (3) quest; and (4) hero.

The first, the *creation myth*, typically answers the following questions: What was it like before our world came into existence? What special conditions were necessary to bring our world into existence? Who or what was responsible for making it all happen?

The *story myth* explains the origins of a group and tells how it came to its present circumstance. A typical example is the classic Greek Ages of Man myth, in which mankind originally lived in a Golden Age characterized by every imaginable benefit being available. Since that ideal time, mankind has degenerated due to human failings. The subsequent ages are associated with increasingly less valuable metals: silver, bronze, and iron.

The *quest myth* involves a search for something that is essential for the life of the group. One or more members of the group are believed to possess the special character necessary to complete the quest and return with the essential something. It may be a magic object, a powerful truth, a unique skill, or the like. The myth of the Holy Grail is an example of the quest myth. People believed the grail contained the blood of Christ. Because of human failings, the grail was lost to mankind, and it could only be retrieved, along with its sacred power, by someone asking the right questions at the appropriate time. The Knights of the Round Table set out to find the grail, but only two of them had an opportunity to meet the test. Parsifal simply accepted what he was told and thus failed. Gawain, in contrast, asked why? His desire to understand why things are, rather than simply accepting that they are, leads him to the grail.

Hero myths are about individuals who are capable of pursuing the improbable quest or of overcoming the monster that threatens the existence of the group. The hero has special physical and/or mental powers, but the

hero's most significant attribute is a capacity for recognizing the value of difference over sameness, change over stasis, the new over the established, and so on.

This presentation of DVC's history in mythic terms will incorporate these classic types. The fit will not always be exactly in accord with how these myths are traditionally rendered, but important parallels will be conveyed.

The DVC Difference Myth

LIKE ALL GOOD STORIES, an organizational myth has a primary theme. This is the foundational feature on which the myth rests. In the case of the DVC myth, the foundational feature is the pursuit of difference. Difference is seen as a positive good, an innovation essential, and a defining principle. It is everything that tradition—the usual way things are done, the lessons of the past, the accepted truths and values—is not.

Creation myths explain how a group's unique world came into being within the often chaotic cosmos that preceded it. For the DVC myth, that chaotic prestate was World War II and its immediate aftermath. The postwar period set the stage for the emergence of a new society. This was to be the Age of the Common Man. The war had been fought by millions of ordinary young men. For most of them, the opportunity for postsecondary education was limited before their military service. Those who survived the war were returning to a society where higher education would be the necessary entry point for most desirable occupations. Providing that educational opportunity was considered a sacred duty by the country's leaders.

American democracy had defeated the forces of fascism. The future of that democracy depended on an educated electorate capable of recognizing antidemocratic tendencies and rejecting them. To realize the goal of creating that electorate, postwar America invested in the expansion of the existing system of public higher education. The objective was to make access to postsecondary education available to any adults who chose to pursue it and to take them as far as their abilities and ambition would carry them. The GI Bill opened the doors to higher education for veterans of the war.

To accommodate the great numbers expected to take advantage of a democratized higher education system, new institutions had to be established. At least two years of postsecondary education were believed essential for effective participation in both economic and political life. The ideal vehicle for that purpose—and for the Age of the Common Man—was the two-year junior college, which was characterized as “the people’s college.” In contrast to four-year colleges and universities, these were local institutions within easy reach of most citizens, with faculties primarily committed to good teaching and to a comprehensive curriculum designed to meet the needs of the broadest spectrum of the adult population.

Creating a Junior College for Contra Costa County

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS B.O. Wilson, along with most of the county’s educational and political leaders, recognized the value of a local junior college. They knew that a number of the county’s veterans and young people were attending junior colleges in surrounding counties at Contra Costa’s expense.

The voters of Contra Costa County were not as enthusiastic, however. The proposal was first put on the 1946 ballot and was defeated by 154 votes in a turnout of only 10 percent of the electorate. During the next two years, the proponents devised a more attractive proposal that included a plan for several campuses that would serve all the major population centers of the diverse county and that promised no new taxes. They mounted a vigorous campaign and ultimately gained the support of over 75 organizations, including veterans clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the School Trustees Association, the Central Committee of the Democratic Party, the county Parent-Teacher Association, and the local AFL-CIO chapter. Although the turnout remained low, the measure passed by almost 800 votes.

With the voters’ approval arrived the first two elements of the *difference myth*. Contra Costa Junior College would be the first multicampus junior college in the nation. It would also be independent, unlike all other California junior colleges at the time, which were either part of high school districts or connected to state colleges.

A Governing Board was appointed by Superintendent Wilson. It was composed of members who had been active in the campaign: a bakery owner, an insurance executive, an advertising and public relations professional, a printing company manager, and an attorney. The Board adopted a three-campus plan, and further pledged that the college would be funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, a practice of paying debts as they are incurred, which was another first among California public junior colleges. Classes began at the Camp Stoneman site before the new District had a budget. Funds were eventually provided from the county budget and a grant from the State Department of Education. The “pay-as-you-go policy” resulted in many years of operation in substandard, makeshift facilities, which included tents and Quonset huts at the early East Campus site.

After a six-month search and consideration of 60 applicants, Drummond McCunn, the assistant superintendent for finance in the Pasadena High School District, was hired as superintendent. The Board’s primary criterion was to find someone who would be a “strong organizer administratively and politically.” McCunn was seen as strong in “the business sense.” He assured the Board that he believed “pay as you go is the only way to go,” and because he had been a high school district administrator, it was assumed he would be equipped to manage a multicampus operation. McCunn had taught in elementary schools in Southern California before his high school district job, and served as president of the Tournament of Roses Association. He had also held offices in the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA, and the Kiwanis Club. To the Board, he appeared to be the ideal administrative and political choice.

McCunn was initially effective in developing the physical plant. With the assistance of influential Board members, space was secured in the former Kaiser shipyard in Richmond and in Camp Stoneman near Pittsburg, and a central office was set up in a hotel suite in the county capital, Martinez.

McCunn’s first personnel selection was Graham Sullivan, a former administrator of the San Francisco Junior College hotel management program. Sullivan recommended hiring Phebe Ward, who had worked with him and was a recognized leader in what was then called “terminal education.” She suggested offering the East Campus director position to her acquaintance, Leland Medsker, who had just completed a term as presi-

dent of the American Association of Junior Colleges (AJCA). Medsker, who had served as director of Wright Junior College in Chicago, accepted and brought along his Chicago associate, Reed Buffington. With leadership imported from outside the local area, the stage was set for the creation of a college that would differ from those around it.

Medsker and Buffington brought a number of fundamental beliefs from their AJCA and University of Chicago experiences. These ideas became the founding principles of the East Contra Costa Campus, later known as East Contra Costa Junior College (ECC), and in 1958, as Diablo Valley College (DVC), guiding the selection of the first generation of faculty members. They can be seen as the college's founding myth or belief system. Most junior colleges at the time incorporated similar beliefs in their stated purposes but treated them as ideals. In contrast, ECC, and later DVC, administration and faculty made them the guidelines for everyday policy and practice.

Briefly stated, the five founding principles were:

- **Open door**—No one will be turned away; no past experience will prevent enrollment. Openness will extend to open classrooms, open offices, open minds.
- **No tracking**—All courses are open to all students; all students will attend the same core courses. There will be no testing or previous grades used to deny entrance. Students will decide for themselves which classes they will compete in.
- **Student-centered**—The college exists primarily for the student; all policies and practices will be designed with the student in mind. Student services will be on a par with instructional services.
- **General education (GE)**—All students will be required to complete the GE program. The program will be composed of core courses in humanities, sciences, social sciences, and arts. The core courses will be integrated to emphasize cross-disciplinary correspondences.
- **Democratic governance**—All college participants—students, staff, faculty—will be full participants in policy decision making. There will be regular opportunities for information dispersion and responsive input by all. The ideals of democracy will infuse all aspects of college life; decision making will be an open, participatory process.

The Special Place: The Difference Myth Put to the Test

MOST ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY in other junior colleges paid lip service to open-door, student-centered principles, but for the founding generation of DVC faculty and administration, their five founding principles defined everyday campus reality. The 1950 Statement of Basic Philosophy by East Campus faculty and administrators emphasizes respect for students as whole persons in terms of their self-reliance and self-direction. It further commits the college to a campus culture characterized by community service and responsible citizenship. It recognizes that there are many ways of learning other than reliance on textbooks and classroom conventions. In the words of the 1950 philosophy statement: “We conceive of the heart of the school as the student . . . and learning as a process of growth continuous through life.” The statement contains many other commitments that proclaim an intent to create a special place undefined by the conventions of ordinary educational institutions.

From the beginning, there was a fundamental commitment to be special—to be different—and to refuse to be defined by the curricular dictates of the state universities and colleges. For 20 years, DVC was the only junior (community) college in California with a no-tracking policy. The founders believed the college had to follow a significantly different approach to postsecondary education. They viewed the university as the epitome of what was wrong with higher education in a democratic society: it was elitist, bureaucratic, faculty centered, and irrelevant for most adults. The ways things were usually done were, by definition, suspect. They saw the authentic community college as the wave of the future. Difference was not only good; it was also essential if postsecondary education was to serve the real needs of present and future generations.

The McCunn Struggles, or The Myth of the Monster

A GROUP THAT ASPIRES to abandon old ways and strike out on a different, unexplored path must expect to encounter opposition, which in myth often takes the form of a powerful monster or giant pledged to prevent passage to

the special place. In the DVC story myth, the powerful monster was Superintendent Drummond McCunn.

The ECC/DVC faculty and administrators' commitment to difference, with its implied (often explicit) criticism of the prevailing modes of thought, played right into the hands of the reactionary right as exemplified by the members of the John Birch Society, of whom Superintendent McCunn was a staunch sympathizer. By the middle of the 1950s, McCunn allegedly had a

[Superintendent] McCunn viewed the vocational programs as the heart of the curriculum. He had little sympathy for the intellectual pretensions of a cross-disciplinary GE-centered curriculum, especially one that fit neither the conventions of the business community nor the university.

number of "informants" among the faculty and staff on the campuses. He was apparently convinced that there were a number of "ringleaders" intent on using the college curriculum to brainwash students into "leftist" thinking and values.

McCunn viewed the vocational programs as the heart of the curriculum. He had little sympathy for the intellectual pretensions of a cross-disciplinary GE-centered curriculum, especially one that fit neither the conventions of the business community nor the university. He made clear that he considered the central office to be the real decision point for all matters, including the shape of the curriculum. He could not condone the concept of a democratic, collegial college community. The

idea that policy should be made by the will of the majority ran against all his organizational instincts.

McCunn came to represent all that the DVC leadership abhorred. He was viewed as bluff, superficial, anti-intellectual, business oriented, untrustworthy, conventional, reactionary, and shortsighted. In other words, he was the embodiment of the creature that needed to be overcome.

In myth, the group must depend on the power of extraordinary individuals to confront and defeat the monster. These are the heroes, and myth is filled with them: Sigurd, Theseus, Gilgamesh, Jason, and Odysseus, to name only a few. In the DVC myth, the hero roles were played by a few faculty leaders

and one exceptional administrator. Although other members of the founding generation (1950–62) participated to varying degrees in opposing the efforts of McCunn to control the college and its programs, the unquestioned leaders were Karl Drexel, Dick Worthen, and John Porterfield. They chose to combat the superintendent and his central office in every way at their command. At first, the struggle was academic, but it soon became war. It was a long and deep struggle, testing loyalties, beliefs, and capabilities.

Aside from McCunn himself, the villains are forgettable. Mythic history portrays them as fools and knaves. The heroes are memorable and many. Myth tends to simplify and so the few must stand for the many. Worthen, Porterfield, and Drexel put their careers on the line week after week for almost 10 years through their unwillingness to bend to the directives of the superintendent's central office. In the face of the superintendent's opposition and refusal to provide support, they worked to fashion a college that reflected the founding beliefs.

In the early 1950s, the Cold War had generated an atmosphere of fear and suspicion in which any deviation from "American traditions and values" was likely to be labeled subversive and pro-communist by right-wing politicians and commentators. Although the most rabid critics of anti-Americanism had lost broad public support by the late 1950s, groups such as the John Birch Society continued to "crusade" against "creeping socialism," which for them included public education, public hospitals, public works, and all forms of "welfare." McCunn was believed by many to be a member of the John Birch Society or at least a "fellow traveler." He was responsible for arranging the American Heritage Days, an annual patriotic program where speakers representing pro-American "crusades" addressed the District's faculty and students.¹ The speakers called for a renewal of patriotism and charged the public schools with a primary responsibility for instilling pro-Americanism in the citizenry. For his efforts, the Freedom Foundation of Valley Forge awarded McCunn a plaque that he proudly displayed on his office wall.

¹ The 1959 program featured Cleon Skousen, author of *The Naked Communist* and former mayor of Salt Lake City. The 1960 speaker was Stary Grange, whose topic was "Freedom—Our Sacred Trust." For the 1961 program, Dr. Fred Schwarz, leader of the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, spoke on the infiltration of communists into democratic societies.

One outcome of his American Heritage Days campaign was an attempt to rid the college of texts and other instructional materials deemed to support “un-American” values and traditions. McCunn was quoted in a local newspaper as claiming that he could name textbooks and teachers that were “definitely slanted toward Socialism and One-Worldism.” He invited “experts” to appear before the Governing Board to point out the un-American features of selected texts.² He expressed his concern about teachers in the social sciences using works by Marx and Freud in their classes. He purchased 90 copies of Dick Worthen’s *The Shape of English*, in which he claimed reference was made to “a philosopher who does not stand for the American way of life.” He denied making the purchase, but a check of the bookstore records showed the books to be signed out over his signature. They were to be distributed to citizens encouraged to attend Governing Board meetings, where they would protest the classroom use of the book.

All this activity on the superintendent’s part was in direct contravention to the philosophy and values expressed by a college faculty and administration committed to challenging convention and traditional mores. By 1960, the conflict between the superintendent and the DVC faculty and staff was severely affecting morale on campus and draining energies that could have been better invested in instruction.

Finally, in spring 1962, the Faculty Association appealed to the Personnel Standards Commission of the California Teachers Association (CTA) to study the deteriorating situation. The Governing Board agreed to participate in the study only if the California Association of School Administrators (CASA) would sponsor it. CASA agreed, in conjunction with the California School Boards Association (CSBA), CTA, and the California Junior College Association (CJCA).

A panel composed of representatives of all four associations was formed and was charged with focusing on poor communication practices and unprofessional behavior. McCunn declined to participate. The panel found McCunn to be a focal point of District problems and unable to provide the necessary professional leadership to the faculty and the District. In response

² Including a local housewife and a San Francisco restaurant owner.

to the findings, McCunn claimed that his lack of teaching experience was a virtue. He believed he was hired to be a manager, not an educator. The panel recommended that “in the light of the almost complete break between himself and the overwhelming majority of the faculty, and the conflict that currently rages in the communities he serves, the Superintendent should tender his resignation to the Governing Board, effective with the close of this school year.” McCunn elected not to resign, and the Board terminated his contract as of June 1962.

The “monster” had been dispatched at last. It was the first instance in California of a faculty being instrumental in forcing the firing of a superintendent. The way was now open to freely travel the path of *difference*. The McCunn experience had a significant, positive outcome. The DVC faculty’s role in defeating an authoritarian, anti-academic, anti-intellectual administration established a tradition of effective faculty leadership in both the instructional and student services areas. That leadership tradition would provide firm foundations for both the Faculty Senate and United Faculty in the years to come.

Of course, even during the years of struggle, the seeds of difference had been sown and some had borne fruit. These included:

- participatory governance, in the form of a weekly meeting of the entire faculty;
- a college hour, or daily class period, established during which no classes were scheduled, to allow time for club meetings, faculty meetings, cultural events, and other activities of a nonclassroom nature;
- regular town hall gatherings;
- organization by interdisciplinary areas, rather than by discipline-related departments;
- an English program based on a scientific approach to language study, including linguistics, semantics, and communication theory;
- a general education program at the heart of the curriculum, with a genuine effort to integrate the studies of language, social science, science, humanities, and art, and an emphasis on understanding general principles, rather than specialized knowledge; and

- no tracking, and in its absence, the integration of vocational programs into the general curriculum.

The Golden Age, 1962–70

LELAND MEDSKER LEFT for the University of California in 1956. Karl Drexel was selected to replace him as college director. Reed Buffington left to join McCunn as assistant superintendent, and was replaced as dean by George Madison. Both Drexel and Madison were deeply committed to the differences that defined DVC as a special place. During the latter years of the McCunn regime, they did what they could to nurture the differences, but they were handcuffed by McCunn's resistance. In fall 1962, with McCunn out of the picture, it was time for a full-blown campaign to create a different kind of community college. Drexel was appointed to serve as interim co-chancellor of the District and as college director. He was confident the DVC faculty leadership would ensure effective governance on campus.

Probably the most fundamental difference to occur during The Golden Age was the general tone of possibility that pervaded campus life. This tone was especially apparent within faculties of the Communication area and the Social Sciences area. In both cases, the seeds of nontraditional approaches to curriculum had been sown in the late 1950s. Perhaps the most radical of these new approaches was the general education core program in English developed by the Communication area faculty.

A Revolutionary Community College English Program

DURING THE 1950s, a core GE course required of all students was Communication 120. It was designed to develop basic communications skills, such as speech, reading, writing, and listening. It was also intended to integrate, in an interdisciplinary manner, with the other core GE courses in the social sciences, the sciences, and the arts. This latter purpose was to be achieved through the study of communication theory, emphasizing the role of lan-

guage in influencing the thinking and perceptions of humans in all realms of activity. Students less well prepared in reading and writing skills were required to enroll in workshops offering basic instruction in these skills. Transfer institutions expected Communication 120 to be treated as freshman composition, requiring students to compose a number of rhetoric-based essays and a term paper.

By 1962, the pressure to design a basic English course that would meet the expectations of the University of California and the California state colleges to the benefit of DVC's transfer student led to the development of the English 122 and 123 courses. True to the program's GE commitment, the subject matter of these courses was language and literature, but the format was based on the essay writing, text reading, and research paper requirements associated with the typical college freshman composition course. For several years, all English 122 and 123 instructors used the same texts, which focused on the study of language, such as *Introduction to Basic Linguistic Principles*, *History of the English Language*, and *Principles of Semantics and Psycholinguistic Implications*. Literature was also approached from an interdisciplinary perspective, exploring the social, psychological, and cultural dimensions of the works. This commitment to general education in required freshman English courses was unique among California community colleges.

In order to meet the needs of less-prepared students in DVC's no-tracking environment, the no-credit workshop program was revamped into several basic pre-122 courses, into which students were counseled either before or after enrolling in English 122. This proved to be an early indicator of the uncertain future of DVC's no-tracking policy. During the years between 1964 and 1974, the rapid increase in both student and faculty populations undermined the stability of curricular programs that relied on the uniformity of common texts, common course outlines, frequent faculty interaction and agreement, and assumptions about the heterogeneity of students. The English faculty tripled in size, with an influx of new instructors with either a university or high-school teaching orientation. That growth meant that the induction of new staff to the non-traditional nature of the DVC curriculum through frequent interactions, both formal and informal, was no longer feasible. Traditional perspec-

tives soon prevailed. The rebellions were more in the nature of refusal to comply with any imposed standards.

By 1974, the English 122 and 123 courses had lost both their language-centered aspect and their GE orientation. Discussion of the courses by the English faculty centered on how many words writing students should complete and how much reading they should do. The responsibility for basic skills was transferred to the Communications Lab, which was designed to serve the needs of “high risk” students. In essence, the DVC English program was indistinguishable from other freshman English programs. Difference had been overwhelmed by the press of numbers and the shift toward statewide standards following the decline in local resources resulting from the Proposition 13 disaster.

A Unique Administrative Arrangement

FROM THE BEGINNING, general education’s resistance to the departmentalization of knowledge was reflected in the organization of the college. Faculty and curriculum were loosely grouped as far as possible into “areas.” This arrangement worked well with a relatively small faculty and a limited offering of courses. The dean of instruction could meet weekly with representatives of the various study subareas. When weekly meetings of the entire faculty were precluded by the numbers, the faculty was grouped into sections of about 20 members for information and policy discussions.

By the early 1960s, there was pressure to form departments to deal with budget, equipment, and facility needs. The argument prevailed and 23 departments were defined. In 1965, a new president, William Niland, reflecting the concerns of a recent accreditation team, determined that dealing directly with 23 department chairs was too cumbersome administratively. He proposed the adoption of a conventional divisional structure with a few appointed divisional chairs reporting to the deans of instruction and student services. The newly created Faculty Senate responded by proposing a joint faculty/administration administrative reorganization committee to develop a plan befitting DVC’s participatory governance tradition.

The reorganization campaign evolved into a contest between advocates of administrative efficiency and advocates of the principles expressed in the DVC statement of philosophy. The senate established an ad hoc committee to study a revolutionary alternative to the divisional structure. The college-within-a-college plan was a topic of discussion on a number of campuses as a response to increased size and loss of informal contact between students and instructors and among faculty in different disciplines.

The Cluster College Experiment

THE PROS AND CONS of a cluster college format were debated within the ad hoc committee. Unable to reach a resolution, the committee asked the senate to open the question to the faculty as a whole. Positions on the issue were expressed at open meetings and in the *DVC Forum*. The argument was essentially between those who supported a centralized hierarchical administrative structure and those advocating a system that reflected the broad participatory decentralized governance envisioned in the college's commitment to interdisciplinary curricula and student-centeredness. The president's proposed structure was characterized as administration and faculty centered, with limited participation through representatives. Ultimately, the issue was put before the faculty for a vote.

It was clear that a complete reorganization into a cluster college format was not an option. Instead, the choice was between the traditional department/division structure and a temporary adoption of that structure alongside a two-year experimental cluster format. The latter option received an

The cluster college proposal was an attempt to breathe new life into the features that had made DVC a special place. The lively discussions surrounding the proposal and its implementation provided many opportunities for assessing the college's commitment to the differences that had earlier defined it.

overwhelming majority of the votes. President Niland reluctantly agreed to the will of the faculty. The proponents of the cluster model enthusiastically went to work and established a two-college plan. Sixty faculty volunteered to participate. Most could only be assigned to the cluster course offerings on a part-time basis. Students enrolled for the first semester were well served with an array of basic general education courses. However, by the second semester, fewer continuing courses were available. The difficulties associated with managing an alternative program within an environment dominated by an opposing structure finally proved too much and the experiment was abandoned after the first year.

The cluster college proposal was an attempt to breathe new life into the features that had made DVC a special place. The lively discussions surrounding the proposal and its implementation provided many opportunities for assessing the college's commitment to the differences that had earlier defined it. The imposition of the traditional department/division structure, with its hierarchy of administrative offices, served notice that DVC's future "participatory governance" would be more adversarial than collegial. The faculty did fight for and succeed in preventing the creation of appointed full-time division chairs. Arguing that the chairs should teach at least half-time and be elected by their division members, the faculty won over the objection of the president. This resulted in another unique DVC feature. Accreditation teams for the next 30 years would observe that elected part-time division chairs should not be effective but they apparently were. The difference myth remained alive.

The Silver Age: Constraints on the Power of the Difference Myth

THE 1960S STUDENT PROTEST and antiwar movements spawned a climate of distrust in institutions and the establishment of the "relevance" credo, which empowered the student with all decisions regarding what to learn, how to learn it, where to learn it, and whom to learn it from. The relevance credo undermined all institutionalized curriculum, especially a required general education program, and gave license to those faculty members who leaned toward the "do your own thing" curriculum. Although this trend

was an extension of the difference concept, it invoked an administrative reaction in management style that was increasingly authoritarian and conventional.

In 1978, the voters of California endorsed Proposition 13, which effectively put an end to locally financed public education. An inevitable result of Proposition 13 was the shift from local tax support to state financing, which eventually led to state standards and state control. This was undoubtedly the most powerful force delimiting DVC's culture of difference.

Still, the 1970s saw evidence of the college's continuing commitment to doing it differently. Among these efforts were the College Readiness Program, a special summer program for potential minority students; the Pittsburg Achievement Program, special support for minority students; *The Communicator*, a newspaper written and edited by minority students; the Ethnic Studies programs; the Women's Studies program; an expansion of the open-door concept to include all aspects of campus activity; the overseas programs for a semester study abroad; the La Honda program, encounter sessions for faculty members; and other less formalized efforts to maintain the sense of community once so natural to the DVC environment. But there was also a dramatic increase in the number of part-time faculty and in the numbers of students in need of basic precollege education.

Unionization of the DVC Faculty

BY THE EARLY 1970S, the collegial relations envisioned in the creation of the Faculty Senate as a full partner in college governance were proving unsatisfactory for a majority of the faculty. State mandates, District Office pressures, and the nature of the hierarchical administrative structure all produced a trend toward a manager-worker organizational culture. It seemed clear to many that collegiality must give way to management-union negotiation. But even here, the DVC difference myth played its role. Rather than affiliate with an outside union organization, such as the California Teachers Association or the American Federation of Teachers, the DVC faculty elected to form an independent local union, which differentiated it from the great majority of community college faculties.

The Bronze Age: the 1980s and Beyond

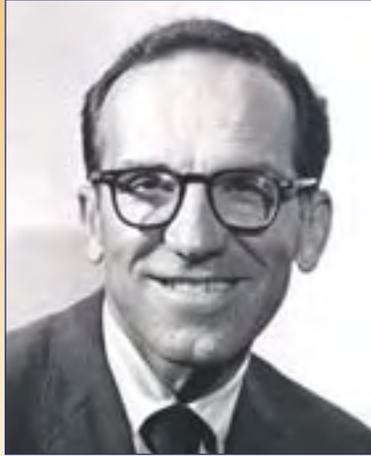
BY 1980, GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT and faculty size made a common ethos almost impossible to maintain. The campus was divided physically, educationally and, even, ideologically into numerous enclaves. The college had evolved into a sprawling complex. A new president did much to instill a sense of the personal to local management, but the true face of management had shifted back to the District Office. [The District's first superintendent] McCunn might have felt at home in the increasingly centralized Contra Costa Community College District.

Much of the innovative energy that had driven DVC was transferred to the new campuses at Los Medanos College and the San Ramon Center, further demonstrating the relationship between small size and newness to innovation.

The myth predicates an Iron Age in which the struggle for basic survival dominates. There are those who feel the experience of the last decade or so qualifies in that regard. An unpopular president, an imposed authority structure, increasingly contentious management-union negotiations, low staff morale, a grade-changing scandal, and an antagonistic chancellor all contributed to an Iron Age characterization. However, in at least one version of the myth, the depths of the Iron Age provide the conditions for a rebirth of the original state of things. Perhaps there is a new Golden Age on the horizon for DVC. It may even be accompanied by a resurgence of the desire to be different.

6

C H A P T E R



Chancellor Harry Buttimer (1974–1984)

A Tribute to Harry Buttimer: The Right Man at the Right Time

Bill Harlan

In Don Mahan's chapter 5 account, Diablo Valley College's History Told in Myth, Karl Drexel was the heroic figure who led the righteous fight against the "monster in Martinez," Superintendent Drummond McCunn. But who inherits that mantle of heroic leadership? Who replaces King Arthur? In the case of the Contra Costa Community College District (District), it was a tall, bespectacled man who more closely resembled a scholar than a valiant crusader. Yet Harry Buttimer, who was chancellor for a decade, faced challenges that were even more daunting than a right-wing

despot. He was a heroic figure whom most people in the District really never knew well, but to whom they are deeply indebted.

WHEN KARL DREXEL RETIRED as chancellor in 1974, and was replaced by Harry Buttimer, people said that the new chancellor had some mighty big shoes to fill. Fortunately for the District, Buttimer had enormous feet. He also had a set of leadership skills that, though different from Drexel's, allowed him to lead the colleges through some of their greatest challenges. Karl Drexel had been a very social administrator, with many good friends at the colleges. He knew the campuses intimately and was personally invested in almost everything about them. By contrast, Buttimer was an outsider, having spent years as the president of San Francisco City College. He was not particularly sociable, but he inspired a fierce loyalty among those who worked most closely with him. Drexel, who had hand-picked Buttimer as his replacement, knew his man well.

Jerry Underwood, who worked with both chancellors as director of planning and development, described Harry Buttimer as "both a people person and a technician." Underwood recalled that when Buttimer first arrived, he immersed himself in the District's load study reports, which capture information about the numbers of students in courses and sections, and are particularly dense documents. Buttimer used the information to learn what was really happening among the welter of departments and programs at the colleges. Once he had digested this information, he set out to visit people on the campuses, where he could interpret what he saw with an informed judgment.

Gene Ross, who joined the Governing Board during Buttimer's term, said, "He taught me a lot as a new Board member about the operation of the District, especially the budget. He had a big heart, but a smart brain." Jean Courtney, who became Buttimer's secretary in the early 1980s, remembers him as "very kind, genuine, and honest. He was beloved by all those who worked with him." Les Birdsall and this writer, who served as presidents of the United Faculty (UF) during those difficult days of forging a union and negotiating the first comprehensive contract, cannot recall ever having any personal animosity against Harry Buttimer. In the political minefield

of District politics, with the competing demands of three different colleges and three insistent presidents, faculties, and staffs, he treated the campuses with scrupulous equality. Being an outsider proved to be an advantage.

Collective Bargaining Sessions

EARLY IN HIS TENURE AS CHANCELLOR, Buttimer faced the challenge of moving to a system of collective bargaining. This was particularly difficult at Diablo Valley College (DVC), as the faculty and administration wrestled with the question of what to do about the elected division heads. Were they part of management or faculty? In chapter 13, Greg Tilles explores the complexities of the issue. Bob Flanagan, representing the UF, and this writer, then president of the DVC Senate, tried without success to find a solution in increasingly frustrating meetings with President Bill Niland and Dean of Instruction John Kelly. We blamed the District Office for what we saw as intransigence. Taking a page from China's Red Guard, I had proposed, half facetiously, that we put up a huge wall poster in the mail room (where every faculty member would see it) that read, "Running dogs of Martinez will die in their own vomit!" Soon afterward, the top dog himself, Harry Buttimer, appeared at our abortive negotiation, and with the clarity of an outsider without any vested interest, showed all of us the way to reach the compromise that eventually resolved the knotty problem, giving both sides a little of what they needed.

In the early days of bargaining, the UF representatives seldom came in direct contact with Harry Buttimer. The District had retained an outside negotiator, a "hired gun" named Ron Glick, who based his expertise on having negotiated with public unions in New Jersey. He talked tough, but we soon discovered that he was no match for us on the intricacies of existing policies and procedures within the District. Buttimer came to the same realization and began to assign seasoned administrators, like Bob Martincich, to the bargaining sessions as Glick's "assistants." That move ensured that contract negotiations eventually became an entirely in-house process, with only employees of the District sitting on both sides of the table.

Proposition 13 Aftermath

THE 1978 PASSAGE OF PROPOSITION 13 was the greatest challenge of Harry Buttimer's tenure and was where his coolness under pressure was most evident. In chapter 14, Governing Board member Gene Ross talks about the political bind Buttimer found himself in during the campaign leading up to the election in June 1978. Harry chose not to give the forces pushing for its passage any ammunition by planning, at least publicly, an alternative budget in the event the proposition passed. As a result, when the proposition was overwhelmingly approved, the chancellor and his small staff at the District Office had to react very quickly to save an institution serving over 30,000 students with several thousand employees. At the time, only three administrators at the District Office were handling all the fallout from the election: Clare Luiselli, director of business services, who crunched the budget; Jerry Underwood, the planning and development head, who took care of the classified layoffs; and Harry Buttimer. They met almost daily with the three presidents and coordinated overall efforts. (Director of Personnel Ray Dondero was then on extended sick leave.)

Buttimer immediately cancelled summer session. He declared publicly that he would do everything he could to protect full-time faculty positions. A myriad of programs and student support services were eliminated on the campuses. Each president was told that his campus would lose the equivalent of 12 full-time classified positions; the president selected the positions to be eliminated, but the intricacies of determining which employees would actually be fired fell to Jerry Underwood at the District Office. The result of this dictum was a massive chain reaction of people falling like dominos. An employee with seniority on one campus would bump someone with less seniority on another campus; a full-time secretary might preempt a half-time person, who in turn would replace someone working quarter time. "People were passing each other on Highway 4 running between Los Medanos College, Diablo Valley College, and Contra Costa College. It took us several years to restore some order," said Underwood. He kept a huge wall chart showing all the moves and carefully documented "hours and paid status," which strictly controlled seniority. At the time, it felt as

if the District was in chaos, but in retrospect, it is clear we were very lucky to have Harry Buttimer, Clare Luiselli and Jerry Underwood in Martinez, keeping the enterprise afloat. As Buttimer used to joke to his colleagues, “At the District Office, we are few in number, but that’s why they pay us the big bucks!”

Harry Buttimer had a generosity of spirit that stood him in good stead in dealing with the many conflicts he faced. As Gene Ross said of him, “Harry was very cool in a crisis, remaining balanced while he managed to handle a lot of different issues. You never saw him sweat.” In addition, both he and Clare Luiselli, according to Les Birdsall, always told the truth, “as long as you asked them the right questions.” Birdsall recalled that after one of his first negotiations as UF president, Luiselli told him, “You did a pretty good job in negotiations, but you left 2 percent on the table.”

Ross could not recall ever seeing Buttimer lose his temper, except once. The chancellor had prevailed on Ross to accompany him to Sacramento to meet with local legislators during one of the frequent crises on state funding. They approached a local assemblyman known for his conservative politics who told them that he had great news that would help the community colleges. Eager for some good news, Buttimer and Ross listened in stunned silence as the assemblyman explained that with a new bill he had just introduced, part-time instructors who were laid off because of summer-school cancellation would no longer be eligible to collect unemployment compensation. They excused themselves and Harry erupted in rage. “Imagine, he thinks penalizing people is somehow a substitute for providing adequate funding for the colleges!” On the way back, the chancellor apologized to Ross for wasting his time.

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A Teachable Moment

SOON AFTER HE HAD BEEN HIRED, and I had become the DVC Senate president, Harry approached me about submitting an application for our District to become one of a select few in the state to be allowed to move to a different kind of academic calendar. We had a tight deadline to meet, and we were unable to get all three campuses to agree to a plan in time. However, the exercise whetted my appetite to try and reform the outmoded academic calendar with which community colleges were saddled at that time. Then, in the aftermath of Proposition 13, I approached Buttimer about again trying to change the calendar to eliminate the “lame duck” session in January. By this time, he had heard about the results of the colleges that had gone ahead with the change. The effects of the altered calendars had been somewhat negative on the all-important level of state funding. He and I argued about instituting reform—I from the perspective of improved instruction, Buttimer from the perspective of the man in charge of the budget in hard times. I insisted that we could find a way to make a change that would be revenue neutral, but he doubted it.

Nevertheless, he finally suggested that he and I go to Sacramento and meet with the chief counsel for the state chancellor of the community colleges, Joe Nussbaum. We spent an entire afternoon with Nussbaum, parsing regulations and looking for loopholes. It finally became apparent that under current state law, there would always be a danger of financial loss with any calendar change. It was only on the drive back from Sacramento that I realized Harry Buttimer had known this all along and had sacrificed the better part of his day to help me reach the same conclusion on my own. In my 47-year career in community college education, I had created many “teachable moments” for my students, but had had very few created for me. Several years later, I helped draft what was called the Flexible Calendar Bill for the State Assembly and made sure it contained a provision that guaranteed no district would be financially penalized for this needed change.

An Award Well Named

HARRY BUTTIMER'S GREAT PASSION was tennis, which he played right up to his final illness. During Wimbledon, he would sneak out of the office a little early so he could watch the match on television, his one guilty pleasure. Jean Courtney remembers his sense of humor and contagious laugh. He would be sitting alone in his office when he would read something that struck him funny and he would begin to laugh. Soon his booming laugh could be heard all over the sixth floor of the District Office building, and everyone would begin to chuckle, even though they weren't in on the joke. Jerry Underwood recalls an office Christmas party at the old Commandant's House in Benicia. These were usually fairly staid affairs that included lunch and a little wine. Promptly at two o'clock, Clare Luiselli, who ran a "tight ship," would begin to round everyone up to go back to work. This time, however, the chancellor was in an expansive mood, and he declared, "Come on, let's have another round of drinks for everybody. I'm buying." He ended up riding back to the office in someone's Volkswagen bus, entertaining all the passengers with his stories.

The loss of Harry Buttimer was a sudden tragedy for the District. One Friday after a meeting, he was riding down the elevator with Les Birdsall, when he complained of a sharp pain in his shoulder. He attributed it to playing too much tennis. That weekend, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and never returned to work. During his short, final illness, Clare Luiselli, who took over temporarily as the acting chancellor, was especially protective of his privacy.

Karl Drexel came out of retirement to serve as the acting chancellor until Jack Carhart was named chancellor. Harry Buttimer died September 28, 1984. Given his achievements during the tumultuous decade he headed the District and his extraordinary personal qualities, it came as no surprise that the Association of California Community College Administrators established an award for the Outstanding Administrator of the Year and named it in Harry Buttimer's honor. In a sense, the circle was completed when Helen Benjamin, the current chancellor, received that award in 2008.

7

CHAPTER



The Battle Over the Reorganization of Diablo Valley College

Bruce Koller

As the colleges have grown more complex and the need for timely decisions more urgent, the traditional division structure of the faculty at all three colleges was seen by some as more problematic. In particular the half-time, elected division chairpersons were declared outdated, and administrators reorganized the colleges into divisions with full-time deans. Only at Diablo Valley College (DVC) did this move result in a decade-long bitter fight. The reason for the resistance may be found in the earlier articles in this volume on the McCunn conflict and on the founding of the United Faculty, which explains how the original compromise on the division chairpersons

came about, as related in chapter 13. Most relevant, however, is the article on the history of DVC seen in mythic terms; the immediate political battle described here was also a continuation of a half-century struggle. Times and circumstances had changed drastically, but the same quest remained—whether or not the Holy Grail was still achievable. Bruce Koller has taught electronics and economics at DVC and has been a longtime faculty leader who was caught in the middle of the conflict he describes here in an even-handed manner.

(Please note that an appendix has been added at the end of this chapter, which provides excerpts from the court ruling related to this subject, filed March 21, 2007.)

IN THE FALL OF 2001, President Mark Edelstein announced the end of the system of division chairs and the institution of division deans at DVC. That announcement led to years of protracted conflict, hostility, and expensive legal battles, with the reorganization still unfinished as of early 2009. To say that the reorganization did not go well would be something of an understatement. But why was this reorganization of a large public community college such a wrenching change? Why did it leave such a legacy of bitterness? Why, for so long, were so many people unable to get beyond their personal views and come together for the good of the college as a whole?

While there were clearly differences of style and personality among the college leaders on both sides of the issue, there seemed to be a more profound difference in how the faculty and the administration looked at the college and what was of paramount importance in how it was organized. After a change in leadership at both the college and the Contra Costa Community College District (District) level, two different cultures and views of the college developed, with little understanding and appreciation of each other's perspective, and little acknowledgement that each had the best interests of the college at heart. Both sides caricatured each other's position, and it seemed impossible to forge a genuine compromise or synthesis of views.

Faculty Support for Division Chairs

MANY FACULTY FELT that the division chair system was a primary reason for the reputation and success of DVC. They saw the collegial governance and administration of the college as a unified whole. While there might be some problems and weaknesses with the system, faculty on the whole saw it as a significant strength of the college.

The system gave faculty a sense that they had a profound influence on the day-to-day operation of the college. It seemed the living embodiment of a genuinely democratic partnership with the administration that allowed management and fiscal realities to be transmitted from top administration to the folks in the trenches and also allowed faculty concerns to be communicated directly to upper management. The weekly division chair meetings were the place where the work of administering the college, making decisions about schedules, problem-solving, and discussing practical issues, took place.

The faculty view of how the college should be organized was essentially as a consensus-seeking group of equals. There was very little sense of hierarchy. The senior faculty and the most junior, the full-time and the part-time faculty, were all known by the same humble title: instructor. A majority of faculty in each division had to give their approval to division chair candidates sent forward for selection by the president. Leadership developed at the grassroots, and faculty could take their turn serving in the administrative ranks and return to the faculty without crossing over permanently from faculty to administration, as was common at many other colleges within the community college system.

Management Support for Division Deans

THE NEW COLLEGE and District leadership viewed the college from a more hierarchical perspective—as a large, complex organization that needed clear lines of responsibility and accountability. While they were aware of the college’s successful past and tradition of cooperation between faculty

and administration, they were focused on the future and how the college would cope with changes they could see bearing down on higher education in general and the college in particular. If there was a criticism to be leveled at DVC as it functioned under the part-time management represented by the division chair system, it was that the college was still being run with a system that might have worked well in the past for a stable era of enrollment growth, ample funding, and little change in the environment, but it was ill-suited to the more fiscally difficult and dynamic world being brought on by changing levels of public fiscal support, technological advancements, and growing private, for-profit competition.

For the top administration, the division chair system was a glaring weakness in the college's organization that left it vulnerable to the dramatic changes sweeping higher education. As for-profit institutions grew rapidly, and colleges moved to online offerings, the top administration of the college and the District saw DVC becoming overly concerned with preserving traditional ways of doing things. They saw the need to expand

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the college's summer offerings while the division chair positions, as originally designed, weren't envisioned as year-round positions and didn't provide full support during the summer. The administration also worried about the ability of division chairs to handle faculty personnel issues effectively, given the fact that division chairs moved back into the faculty ranks after their terms ended. There was concern that division chairs were unwilling to make tough decisions about personnel problems because of an inherent conflict of interest: if they made enemies as a division chair, they could find themselves vulnerable to reprisal when they rejoined their department. The faculty

culture of consensus and collegiality also meant that they might find it difficult to discipline their peers when problems arose.

Senior faculty were aware that the system wasn't perfect, but they believed very strongly in the principle of a college with strong faculty leadership on issues of both curriculum and administration. They felt that the system was in need of an overhaul, not outright replacement. They also believed that they had Title 5 regulations on their side in the sense that any sweeping reorganization of the college's structure required collegial consultation, a phrase that faculty took to mean they had equal say with the administration and the power to force a genuine compromise on any reorganization.

One of the ironies of the situation was that DVC President Mark Edelstein had been a statewide faculty leader during the time when the new community college regulations, often referred to by the bill that created them, AB 1725, were written. Indeed, he was fond of pointing out the major part he had in writing them. These regulations spelled out the situations when collegial consultation was required. Edelstein's history as a strong voice for faculty at the state level had been a major reason senior faculty advocated strongly for his selection as president when Phyllis Peterson retired. Now, he seemed to have switched sides, arguing against the faculty perspective on this issue, and some faculty felt a sense of betrayal that further complicated the situation.

Implementing the Reorganization

CLEARLY, THERE WAS A MAJOR DISCONNECT between top administration and senior faculty when it came to attitudes about the need for replacing the division chairs with permanent division deans. While the issue had been discussed at great length by top administration, there had not been serious discussions with the faculty about the issue. Most faculty only heard rumors that management was going to replace the division chairs with division deans. The Faculty Senate president at the time, Gay Ostarello, urged the college president to have an open discussion of the issue with faculty before making any permanent changes. When the division chairs, in a meeting with the president before the start of the fall 2001 semester, got the sense that the change was imminent, they reported this to their divisions, prompt-

ing several divisions to vote on resolutions supporting the current division chair structure. This apparently led the president to conclude that faculty were not willing to approach the decision with open minds and caused him to issue a famous (or infamous) memo, flatly declaring that division chairs would be replaced with division deans.

This upset many faculty, none more than the Faculty Senate president, who thought she'd had a deal with the college president on a thorough discussion of the issue. Many faculty were also concerned that the administration was violating Title 5 regulations by making this decision unilaterally, without collegial consultation. Faculty took their concerns to the District Governing Board. The Board then instructed the college president to consult with the college community on the issue before making a final decision. This consultation with the various constituencies of the college, represented by their formal organizations (the Faculty Senate, the Classified Senate, and the student government association) was clearly required by state regulations. It was different, however, from the collegial consultation between the administration and the faculty that was required for all academic and professional matters. Thus the Board had not supported the faculty contention that this issue was a special one involving the roles and responsibilities of faculty, separate from the concerns of classified employees and students.

Faculty then appealed to the state chancellor of the community college system, asking him to instruct the District Governing Board and college president to follow the collegial consultation process required (in their view) by the law. The state chancellor deflected this appeal. He used informal means to get the parties talking and suggested they use mediation, which they did. Unfortunately, both sides had sticking points that prevented them from reaching a compromise on the issue. The college president was adamant that the positions be full-time management positions while the faculty insisted that the positions had to include at least some teaching, keeping them in the hybrid management/faculty form. Faculty believed that this would keep the issue within the realm of collegial consultation and give them leverage in terms of any future reorganizations. The president's unwillingness to compromise on this issue may have contributed to the conviction on the part of faculty leaders that they were right in their contention

about the need for collegial consultation, although the president publicly disagreed with that contention.

Faculty Response to the Reorganization

WHEN MEDIATION FAILED to produce a compromise acceptable to both sides, the president moved ahead with the reorganization, claiming to have met the requirement for consulting with college constituencies. The Faculty Senate decided to hold a vote on whether the college faculty had confidence in the president's leadership. When this vote was taken, faculty voted overwhelming (over 90 percent) that they had no confidence in the president's leadership. Immediately after the vote, the president announced at a Governing Board meeting that he was leaving the college to take a position as superintendent/president of another California community college district. Within days of his announcement, following an uproar among faculty at the district in question, the president was forced to withdraw his candidacy for the position. To say that many folks were in shock at the rapid pace of events would be an understatement.

The District Governing Board formally responded to the faculty vote of no confidence with a letter expressing their full support for the college president and the job he was doing. Many faculty were stunned by this response. For a college president to have his leadership seriously questioned by such an overwhelming number of faculty seemed to require some corrective action. The Board's letter seemed to say, in no uncertain terms, that the president's leadership style and actions weren't the problem. The attitude of the faculty was the problem. This reinforced an "us versus them" perspective on the part of many faculty.

The Faculty Senate then took up the question of what to do in response to the impending reorganization and elimination of division chairs. The atmosphere was especially charged, given the vote of no confidence, the president's abortive job change, and the Board's unqualified support of the president. Faculty leaders overwhelmingly believed that the reorganization violated Title 5 regulations and thus was illegal. They voted unanimously to oppose the reorganization by legal means. They

also voted to recommend that faculty not participate in the hiring of the new division deans and that applicants for the positions be given a letter from the Faculty Senate informing them that the position they were applying for was the subject of a lawsuit. There was a very clear, if unspoken, understanding that these new positions were illegal and that faculty shouldn't apply for them. Thus, overwhelmingly, the applicants for the positions were people from outside the District. The refusal of the faculty to apply for the positions or participate in the hiring process made even more stark the "us versus them" division of the college on both sides of the administration-faculty divide.

The refusal of the faculty to apply for the positions or participate in the hiring process made even more stark the "us versus them" division of the college on both sides of the administration-faculty divide.

After appealing to the Governing Board, the Faculty Senate formally appealed to the state chancellor to require collegial consultation on the part of the administration. The state chancellor rejected the senate's appeal, claiming that the organization of management was not one of the academic and professional matters requiring collegial consultation. The senate then voted to take the state chancellor and the District Governing Board to court on the matter. Individual faculty members contributed their own money to finance this effort.

Protracted Struggles, Legal and Otherwise

MEANWHILE, THE NEW DIVISION DEANS started their jobs amid confusion, uncertainty, and even outright hostility from some faculty. Many of them were from outside California and were unfamiliar with the unique participatory governance structure used in the state. Many faculty viewed them as illegitimate authorities. Faculty were also angered by the fact that the president, while he formally apologized for his handling of the reorganization at the start of the new academic year, seemed to take no action behind the

scenes to mend fences with the faculty over time. He withdrew into closed management meetings and was seldom seen around campus. He would periodically apply for presidential positions in other districts. At first, he tried to keep these applications confidential, as he had with the one after the vote of no confidence, but eventually he began publicly announcing them. He would routinely make it to the final round of candidates but was never selected, perhaps in part because of the publicity surrounding the vote of no confidence at DVC.

The president seemed to take the faculty vote of no confidence as the end of his relationship with the faculty at DVC. He did not attempt to establish a different working relationship with faculty and seemed to see leaving DVC as the only way to resolve the situation. However, it proved far more difficult for him to leave than he had anticipated. At the same time, he stated privately that since he had the support of the Board, the faculty's dissatisfaction with him was irrelevant. He maintained that the tense, antagonistic climate at the college was the responsibility of all members of the college community and not that of the college leadership alone.

The lawsuit brought participatory governance at the college to a halt. Faculty were unwilling to make any decisions that related to the division deans without first hearing the court's ruling. The president asked that the faculty take up the issue of reorganizing the divisions, since two of the new division deans were responsible for two divisions each. Faculty refused to take up this question. Some of them saw the imposition of the division deans without the restructuring of the divisions as a cynical move by the president to avoid collegial consultation on something that clearly did involve an academic and professional matter.

When the faculty's case was finally heard, the judge ruled in favor of the state chancellor and the District Governing Board on the crucial question of whether collegial consultation was required, although he did find in favor of the faculty on other issues involved in the case (see *Appendix* for excerpts, following this chapter). The Faculty Senate then considered whether to appeal the decision, getting a second legal opinion before voting to appeal the ruling. This was a disappointment for the president, who had hoped the faculty would accept the court's decision and end the stalemate that had developed.

Thus, a cold war between the Faculty Senate and the administration continued for almost five years, with the faculty's legal appeal finally ending in early 2007 when the appeals court unanimously upheld the lower court's ruling in favor of the state chancellor and the District Governing Board. In another ironic twist, President Edelstein was no longer at DVC when the final decision was handed down. Perhaps this was just as well. The ruling could be interpreted as a pyrrhic victory for the president and the District Governing Board. The faculty had managed to keep the reorganization from being fully implemented because of the long legal fight.

The faculty's response to the president's unilateral change in governance at DVC highlighted a basic contradiction in the process. While the president had changed only the management structure by replacing the 10 half-time division chairs with eight full-time deans, he had not changed the number of divisions. He was perhaps only too well aware that, since DVC's divisions were organized along curricular lines, any change to the number of divisions was an item that clearly did require collegial consultation. Thus, as of this writing in early 2009, the college continues to have two of the deans overseeing two divisions each. The college has so far been unable to reorganize in a rational way, where the number of divisions matches the administrative structure overseeing them.

Epilogue

WITH A NEW COLLEGE PRESIDENT, a new spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, and a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of both the faculty and the administration, perhaps the reorganization of the college can finally be completed. This understanding has been dearly won, with a great deal of money, energy, and emotion having been spent on the fundamental clash of visions about how the college should be run and about how a major change in institutional structure should be accomplished. Could it have been otherwise? And what larger challenges could the college have taken on if it had not been mired in this epic struggle for so long? For those who lived through it, these questions linger.

APPENDIX

Filed 3/21/07

CERTIFIED FOR PUBLICATION

IN THE COURT OF APPEAL OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FIRST APPELLATE DISTRICT
DIVISION THREE

DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE FACULTY SENATE,
Plaintiff and Appellant,

v.

CONTRA COSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT et al.,
Defendants and Respondents.

A108713 (Contra Costa County Super. Ct. No. NO3-0005)

Following are excerpts from the court decision filed March 21, 2007:

This case concerns whether the Education Code or applicable regulations required a community college district to engage in collegial consultation with a college's academic senate before effecting an administrative reorganization. In September 2001, the President of Diablo Valley College (DVC) announced that, as part of a district-wide reorganization, professional deans would be hired for managerial positions previously filled on a part-time basis by faculty members. The Diablo Valley College Faculty Senate (Faculty Senate) complained this change could not be undertaken without its consent, based on regulations requiring collegial consultation for policies relating to "academic and professional matters." (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, §§ 53200, 53203, subd. (a). After several unsuccessful complaints to the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (Chancellor), which resulted in a series of legal opinions from the Chancellor concluding the reorganization did not impose a duty of collegial consultation, the Faculty Senate filed a petition for writ of mandate against the Contra Costa Community College District (District) and its governing board (Board) and a complaint for declaratory **relief** against the Chancellor. The trial court agreed that the regulations did **not** require collegial consultation and denied relief. As the third neutral entity to evaluate the question, we reach the same conclusion and affirm the judgment.

BACKGROUND

History of DVC Division Chairs and the Change to Professional Deans

Beginning in approximately 1968, DVC employed faculty “division chairs” to manage the various academic divisions within the college. Division chairs were nominated by a majority vote of full-time faculty members within each division and then appointed to the position by the university president. Selected faculty members served up to two consecutive three-year terms as division chair and continued to teach part-time during this period. At the end of his or her service, a division chair generally resumed full-time teaching responsibilities. Division chairs acted as first-line managers for their divisions.

In addition, in 1982 or 1983, a description of the procedure for selecting division chairs was added to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the District and United Faculty, the union representing faculty members in District colleges. The CBA identifies division chairs as “management positions.” The significance of this description’s appearance in the CBA is another subject of dispute between the parties.

In the spring of 2001, the chancellor of the District (Charles Spence) determined it would be advantageous for colleges in the District to switch from the division chair system, which all three were using, to full-time management by professional administrators.

Opinions of the State Chancellor and Legal Proceedings

Although the change from division chairs to professional deans was accepted at other colleges in the District, it was controversial at DVC. On September 28, 2001, the Faculty Senate filed a formal complaint with statewide Chancellor Thomas J. Nussbaum arguing state regulations required the District to consult collegially with DVC faculty before implementing the proposed reorganization. Specifically, the Faculty Senate maintained that the reorganization was an “academic or professional matter” requiring consultation (§ 53203, subd. (a)) because it would alter faculty roles in governance

(§ 53200, subd. (c)(6)).

The Chancellor treated the Faculty Senate’s September 2001 letter (and subsequent letters) as a minimum conditions complaint triggering the office’s duty to investigate, and on October 23, 2001, he issued the first of several legal opinions addressing the proposal to replace division chairs with full-time deans.

Legal opinion L 01-26 reported that the Board had tabled the proposed change for 90 days to allow for continuing informal discussions between the DVC faculty and administration. Because the Board had taken no action to implement the

reorganization, the Chancellor observed a formal complaint about the lack of collegial consultation was “technically premature.” Nevertheless, in order to provide guidance, the Chancellor identified specific changes that might require collegial consultation if they were implicated by the District’s actions, but he also repeated the general rule—set forth in his September 1997 advisory opinion on shared governance (legal opinion M 97-20)—that mere changes to a District’s administrative organization do not require collegial consultation. The Chancellor issued a second opinion almost a month later. Legal opinion L 01-31 (November 15, 2001) repeated the prior opinion’s conclusion that changes in the District’s management structure “might” require collegial consultation if they could be construed as affecting faculty roles in governance. However, consultation would not be required if the change was merely to a past practice rather than to a policy. In addition, because the division chair practice was outlined in the CBA with United Faculty, the Chancellor believed collegial consultation would be inconsistent with a regulation exempting the provisions of collective bargaining agreements from such consultation obligations (§ 53204).

The Board formally approved the replacement of DVC’s division chairs with full-time deans in December 2001, and the Faculty Senate renewed its complaint with Chancellor Nussbaum. On July 22, 2002, the Chancellor issued an exhaustive opinion (legal opinion O 02-19) reviewing all aspects of the District’s reorganization, including the change from division chairs to deans. He concluded the regulations require collegial consultation only for “matters that go to the heart of faculty expertise,” based on “their expertise as teachers and subject matter specialists and their professional status.” Consistent with this understanding, the Chancellor’s office had developed a general rule that management reorganizations do not require collegial consultation, and the Chancellor discerned no reason to depart from this rule with regard to the District’s reorganization. Specifically, because the reorganization concerned only management of the colleges, it did not affect “governance structures . . . related to faculty roles” (§ 53200, subd. (c)(6)). The Chancellor also found that the faculty’s role in selecting division chairs was established through the collective bargaining process, and collegial consultation on the matter was therefore precluded.

On January 8, 2003, the Faculty Senate filed a petition for writ of mandate (Code Civ. Proc., § 1085) against the District and the Board and a complaint for declaratory relief against the Chancellor. Later in January 2003, counsel for the Faculty Senate sent a letter to Chancellor Nussbaum advising him that the Senate had just discovered the existence of a District policy for the selection of division chairs. This policy, which counsel represented had been in effect for many years, was contained in the District’s Curriculum and Instruction Procedure Manual. The Chancellor responded with a fourth opinion. In legal opinion O 03-13 (May 2, 2003), the Chancellor observed that, just like AP 4111.07, there was no evidence the provision in question was ever adopted by the Board. The Chancellor therefore continued to maintain collegial consultation

was not required, and he reiterated his additional conclusions that the division chair procedure was not an “academic or professional matter” requiring consultation (§ 53200, subd. (c)) and that the parties’ CBA precluded such consultation.

After a hearing, on October 13, 2004, the trial court entered an order denying the declaratory relief.”

DISPOSITION

The judgment is affirmed. Appellant shall bear costs on appeal.

McGuinness, P.J.

We concur:

Parrilli, J.

Pollak, J.

Trial Court: Contra Costa County Superior Court

Trial Judge: Steven K. Austin

Law Offices of Robert J. Bezemek, Robert Bezemek and Patricia Lim for Plaintiff and Appellant

Diepenbrock Harrison, Karen L. Diepenbrock, Gene K. Cheever, Lara M. O’Brien as Amicus Curiae on behalf of Plaintiff and Appellant

Shupe and Finkelstein, John A. Shupe for Defendant and Respondent Contra Costa Community College District

Bill Lockyer, Attorney General, Jacob A. Appelsmith, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Miguel A. Neri and Fiel Tigno, Supervising Deputy Attorneys General, Karen Donald, Deputy Attorney General for Defendant and Respondent Chancellor of the California Community Colleges.

PART II

Defining Our Campuses as the People's Colleges



Students on the Diablo Valley College campus, 1985

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C H A P T E R



Beverly Reardon Dutra became a longtime instructor at Diablo Valley College.

A Student Remembers West Contra Costa Junior College

Beverly Reardon Dutra

Like Jean Knox, Beverly Reardon Dutra came to Contra Costa College as a young woman. Here, she details the ways in which her time at the new, exciting college was different from her high school experience. The absence of limiting assumptions was liberating for students. Not surprisingly, Dutra went on to become one of the most committed instructors at Diablo Valley College (DVC). We often find this connection between becoming an engaged community college student and later a successful college professional.

LIVING IN RURAL NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, I frequently drive by huge, ancient oak trees. At almost every encounter, I think of all the life forms inhabiting these trees and the supportive interaction with the surrounding environment. Once again, I am returning to lessons learned in general education life science classes at Contra Costa College. The same process happens to me in art museums, political meetings, and community activities. The general education courses I was so fortunate to experience allow me to look at a range of alternatives and consequences and to draw broader personal and social conclusions. Those long-ago classes truly provided life-long learning.

Following high school, I was headed to San Francisco State College, but my father had become interested in the local junior college and persuaded me and several friends to revise our plans and attend West Contra Costa Junior College (WCCJC). He had great trust in the community leaders who were developing this new kind of educational facility. The City of Richmond had experienced dramatic changes during World War II and had to face many new educational demands. My choice to enter this fairly new enterprise became a life-changing event.

In September 1955, I enrolled at WCCJC for its last year located at the old Kaiser Shipyard in Richmond. The new campus in San Pablo opened in 1956, and I was lucky to be in the first group of students to attend classes on the “hill.”

Richmond schools were bound by a tiered tracking system, with entrance to UC Berkeley the top tier, and the great majority of students shunted off to prepare for blue-collar jobs. The different groups were “eagles, robins, and sparrows.” Once you were labeled, your opportunities were limited by that designation. Born and raised in Richmond, I had chafed throughout school at the biases and rigid perceptions tracking had “entrenched” into classes and teachers.

At WCCJC, it was refreshing to find teachers who were free from these “teaching judgments,” fully engaged with the subject matter, and demonstrating consistent concern for student learning. Many of the instructors were World War II veterans and were genuinely interested in new ways of thinking and problem solving. They had hope for the future and a real investment in student success and fair treatment—for all kinds of students.

They had a wider picture of the world. Without tracking, my friends burst out of their old “labels.” Responding to new expectations, they became productively engaged with these fresh educational opportunities.

Understanding the Mission

WHAT A WORLD OPENED FOR ME! I do not believe it was merely the exciting awareness that occurs when any student enters college. At WCCJC, the pieces all came together in a harmonious flow. Counselors guided, classes were scheduled when students needed them (accommodating a number of Korean War veterans), and teachers, staff, and administrators were all accessible. The centrally located cafeteria was always full with a mix of faculty and students. You had the feeling the faculty and staff were highly knowledgeable, had a real interest in your success, and were not bound by old perceptions. They all seemed to understand their “mission.” At the same time, they expected you to work hard and to succeed, so you did. If help was needed, it was viewed as skills improvement and not tied to your basic capacity to think or to any earlier lack of success in school.

In a mandatory college orientation psychology course, instructor-counselor George Coles encouraged me to rigorously assess my interests and abilities. In 1955, standard career choices for females were elementary school teacher, secretary, nurse, stewardess, or homemaker. With Coles’s honest support and direction, I gained the awareness and motivation that led me to choose community college teaching as a career. That solid foundation of support also allowed me to overcome a variety of obstructions to making my dream a reality. His teaching, as well as that of others, led to Stanford University and a master’s

Many of the instructors were World War II veterans and were genuinely interested in new ways of thinking and problem solving. They had hope for the future and a real investment in student success and fair treatment—for all kinds of students. They had a wider picture of the world.

degree in psychology and to San Francisco State College and a junior college teaching credential. The education courses in the credential program were particularly stimulating to me because of my experiences as a community college graduate. I had been on the receiving end of a highly productive philosophy and had been given just a taste, a hint, of the quality and positive results that can come with engagement with that kind of teaching. I am deeply indebted to my counselor, George Coles, and Bob Faul, dean of student personnel, as well as a host of talented teachers, including Ray Dondero, Bob Pence, Mario Pezzola, and Jane Hunnicutt.

The Contra Costa campus was a cleverly built, tightly constructed, and constantly reinforced world—a total atmosphere that encouraged learning and forced engagement of the mind with the problems, and the solutions, of the world. The educational experiences constantly pushed students toward interaction with an active citizenry. At 17, I knew there was something extra, something special. But I had just a vague sense of the quality of the school. My father had been right. The learning experiences at WCCJC built a solid foundation for my egalitarian bent and honed values that would see me through a college teaching career.

Move to San Pablo Campus

BUT THEN IN 1957, with the move to the new San Pablo campus, students sensed a diminishment in the open, interdisciplinary focus. The intensity of the energy lessened. The new buildings featured more large lecture halls, and faculty members were not as accessible as they had been at the shipyard. The cafeteria was now down the hill, away from faculty offices and classrooms. Students saw far fewer teachers. At the time, I was too inexperienced to be aware of what was happening or to understand the eventual consequences. Only later did I learn that the leadership foundations were under extreme stress, evidenced by the consistent departure of many top-flight administrators. In short order, West Contra Costa would turn to a more classic academic model.

In 1961, I became an instructor in social science, psychology, and eventually family life at Diablo Valley College (DVC), and I quickly realized what

a valuable introduction my student days at Contra Costa had given me. What started at WCCJC—that open-door, student-centered philosophy—was reinforced and strengthened at ECCJC, now DVC. Those early underpinnings taught me what it was like to be a student in a dynamic institution and gave me insights into the ways a structured environment could elicit student commitment and success. I came to understand what had made my own junior college days so positive: the presence of a clear philosophy of education.

DVC was strongly articulate in its statement of the importance of general education, and it managed to implement the open-door concept into daily campuswide actions. The majority of teachers and administrators seemed deeply imbued with the philosophy and possessed the skills and drive to make it work. The campus also had a greater number of teachers and administrators who were able to translate this thinking into pragmatic action. The result is an institution guided by a powerful set of educational values that truly serves both students and the community.

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C H A P T E R



New students seek counseling and information at the start of classes, September 1950.

Counseling as a Foundation of the College

Vince Custodio

Like many of the other authors represented here, Vince Custodio had a varied career. He began as a counselor at Diablo Valley College (DVC), and then went to Los Medanos College (LMC), where he was one of the original administrators. In the last years of his career, he returned to DVC as a counselor. In this article, he explores the centrality of counseling for student success and touches on some of the different ways counselors have viewed their task over the years.

THE CAMPUS OF EAST CONTRA COSTA Junior College began with a staff of 30 faculty, including a few counselors. Dr. Leland Medsker was the first director (president) and Dr. Reed Buffington was dean of instruction. Students were offered a varied curriculum and vocational training programs. The college's first counselors included Bob Lindsey, who later went into administration, and Charlie Collins, who left during the first Superintendent McCunn battles and returned later to help establish Los Medanos College.

Collins had begun as a counselor for returning GIs after World War II and was probably responsible for establishing much of the counseling culture at DVC. The college provided a professional counseling staff to help students adjust to the demands of college and set academic, vocational, and career goals. Because most of the students in those early days were young, much of the counselors' time and effort was taken up with guidance. The teaching faculty and counselors combined to prepare students for the next level of academic or vocational education.¹ In fact, we used to say our primary goal was to get the students through the first two years. Counselors taught a required course for all students—Psychology A/Psychology for Personal Living—for the associate in arts (AA) or associate in science (AS) degree. Students typically built a rapport with their counselor/teacher and would follow up by making counseling appointments. Counselors also taught guidance classes for career exploration and led discussions on college and personal adjustment issues.

The DVC faculty and administration developed the motto, "The student is the heart of the college," an ideal that persists to this day. In recognition of that commitment, all students were regarded as adults, ready to accept the trials, tribulations, and rewards of the college experience. Coun-

¹ The Commission for Higher Learning and the State Department of Education developed a Master Plan for higher education in 1960. The plan declared that the top one-eighth of California high school graduates would be eligible to attend any University of California campus, provided they met a list of subject requirements, including proper test assessment. The top one-third of high school graduates, in turn, would be eligible to attend any California state college or university if they met basic requirements. Eligible students meeting the above criteria would be able to transfer at any time from the community college. Those not eligible were required to complete 56 transferable units with a GPA of at least 2.4.

selors worked cooperatively with the faculty toward the same educational goals, always with the student at the center. This was facilitated because the teachers, counselors, and administrators were so few that they could talk easily with one another. Among the other early counselors were Ashley Stevens, Jane Castellanos, Robert Gilmore, Anna Harelson, Gene Thomas, Wayne Hayden, Helen Lindgren, and Bill Walsh. Verle Henstrand was the popular dean of students and counseling services. Many of these early giants were generalists, that is, people who had not been trained specifically as counselors. For example, Jane Castellanos was an expert in child development, Helen Lindgren was trained in physical education, and Verle Henstrand had been a business teacher, but they were all outstanding in their new assignments. Together, the counselors and faculty developed and supported a strong integrated general education curriculum that would serve as the underpinning for the AA degree and the AS degree. The core courses were interdisciplinary and included the fields of the social sciences, humanities, physical and biological sciences, and mathematics, as well as English and communications skills. From my experience, I can say that each of the three autonomous colleges in the Contra Costa Community College District (District) developed a unique approach to counseling. There is no such thing as a Districtwide counseling program.

The DVC counseling staff recognized that in order for students to make the break from high school or the military to civilian life, they needed to think of themselves as “real” college students and respond accordingly. The concept of the open door was adopted, whereby any high school graduate or any person reaching the age of 18 was welcomed to DVC without regard to previous academic success or test scores. This meant that a student or any resident in the community could enroll in classes for personal interest and enrichment. For the large part-time eve-

The notion that “the student is the heart of the college” was being seriously tested, as the state demanded quantifiable accountability. But DVC, especially the counseling staff, has tried to remain true to the commitment.

ning population, counselors were available to discuss student concerns. Course prerequisites were established to ensure a better chance of success, and tracking or grouping by “ability” was not imposed on anyone. In the fall of 1958, the Governing Board, with student input, adopted the name of Diablo Valley College to replace the East Contra Costa Junior College designation, and the appellation of junior college was changed to community college. In some ways, the change in name was a signal of the change to come in the students we served.

Determining Our Relationship with Students

I CAME TO DVC in the fall of 1963, right after the battle with Superintendent McCunn and his minions. Like all the faculty hired in those heady days, I learned the details and lessons of that conflict. I had spent my early years at Martinez Junior High and Alhambra High School. In fact, my DVC colleague, Gene Thomas, had served with me. I would spend 12 years at DVC as a counselor, and Gene and I would move to LMC in 1974 for its opening. Then, in the last few years of my career, I would return to DVC to work once again as a counselor.

One of the issues that faced us from the beginning was what our relationship with students should be. For many, the task was to offer academic advice and to serve as a sounding board and resource provider to help the students succeed. Others saw their task as operating with a modified therapy model, offering help to individuals dealing with personal problems. This tension never really disappeared. Adding to the tension was the steady influx of new students and new demands, which at times threatened to overwhelm the system.

In our early days at DVC, most of the students we saw were right out of high school, but this began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. We began to reflect the community we were to serve as a community college. More and more students from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds flocked to the college. Older students, especially women returning from the home and workplace, were attracted. Elsewhere in this volume, you can read about the efforts to serve reentry and minority students. This demographic shift

had a tremendous impact on what was taught at the college and who would teach it. The change was also reflected in the counseling staff, whom we hired, and what they were called on to provide.

Remaining True to Our Commitment

PRIOR TO 1978 and the passage of Proposition 13, community colleges were funded with local and county taxes. After that date, the Commission on Higher Education and the State of California Education Department began mandating various community college practices, including formalized matriculation between high schools and community colleges. New regulations included the assessment of basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills prior to college enrollment, primarily for advisement purposes. Naturally, the matriculation requirement affected counseling and advising at community colleges throughout California. More than ever, counseling was considered a vital aspect of student services; however, it was left up to each college district to implement state mandates. The notion that “the student is the heart of the college” was being seriously tested, as the state demanded quantifiable accountability.

But DVC, especially the counseling staff, has tried to remain true to the commitment. At the time matriculation was introduced, the policy of the DVC Admissions Office was that students must understand their options with regard to the published matriculation process. Admissions also referred students to the Counseling Office for details about meeting matriculation requirements. It was then up to the students to follow through with the information before attending classes. At first, few sanctions were placed on students if they didn't voluntarily complete the recommended procedures. Over time, the “advising” process has had to become a kind of tracking system, as the state has held the community colleges accountable for the success of their students.

One of the most interesting counseling experiments took place in the early days at Los Medanos. Charlie Collins, one of President Jack Carhart's chief advisors, was fascinated with the idea of peer counseling: students advising students. He wrote extensively about the idea and tried to implement it. The

few counselors who were assigned at LMC were supposed to train the student peer counselors in addition to their regular assignments. The experiment, like so many “good ideas” in the history of the colleges, fell by the wayside.

The Role of Counselors Today

COUNSELORS AT THE FIRST TWO COLLEGES had always been involved in liaison programs with the District high schools. When LMC opened in 1974, it established its own liaison programs with the eastern county high schools. DVC counselors have been assigned to communicate with various feeder high schools in an effort to facilitate student transition to the college and to serve as a resource to counselors, teachers, and potential students. They are also available to students when they arrive at the college.

Counselors serve as liaison professionals with representatives of four-year colleges in order to help with student transition from DVC to four-year institutions. A DVC counselor is assigned the task of coordinating acceptable course equivalencies of transfer courses with the University of California and selected California state colleges and universities. This is done in an effort to make the transfer process as smooth as possible for students. The Counseling Department helps to host the popular College Transfer Day on the college commons, when students can talk face-to-face with various college representatives and receive firsthand information. Liaison people from four-year colleges visit the Counseling Center periodically and are available to answer questions concerning academic majors, admission procedures, student activities, financial aid, and the like. The college transfer program has been very successful in enabling many students to transfer to four-year degree programs.

Each year, Diablo Valley College attracts a large number of international students who hope to continue their education at four-year institutions throughout the United States. Designated counselors are assigned to help these overseas students, whose presence adds to the rich diversity of the DVC student body.

From this brief description, you can see how the role of the counselors at all the campuses has changed over the decades. These professionals are

asked to serve more and more students of enormously diverse backgrounds and varied needs. A comparison of today's counseling staff at DVC with the staff of 60 years ago makes clear the nature of the change. Today's college counselors are fully prepared to meet the needs of their students, while never forgetting the decades-old commitment to the ideal that "the student is the heart of the college."

Author's note: To prepare for this article, I had extensive conversations with David Glover, one of the faculty members who taught math at the original Richmond Shipyard campus. He also shared copies of the college yearbook for the inaugural years 1950–51, 1952, and 1953. Two written works also proved extremely helpful in refreshing my memory: *Diablo Valley College—The First Forty Years, 1949–1989: "The Heart of the College is the Student—"*, by Don Mahan, Ruth Sutter, and Greg Tilles (Pleasant Hill, CA, 1990); and "The First Twenty-Five Years of the Contra Costa Community College District, by Karl O. Drexel, Superintendent. A Statement to the Governing Board of the Contra Costa Community College District" (circa 1975).

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C H A P T E R



Los Medanos College construction site
in Pittsburg, California, 1973

The Los Medanos Organization as Idealism Reborn

Richard Livingston

In 1949, the very first courses the fledgling Contra Costa Junior College District offered were held at the Army base, Camp Stoneman, between Pittsburg and Antioch. Twenty-five years later, in 1974, the doors opened at a new college, Los Medanos, on the same site. As previous articles have shown, both the other colleges in the Contra Costa Community College District (District) had opened with an idealism born of the possibilities of a new beginning, and Los Medanos followed suit. However, few other colleges had such a long planning process, which rationally connected every-

thing from the curriculum and training of the teachers to the kinds of doors that would be used.

In the 25 years since the District had begun, a host of different pressures had begun to sap that earlier idealism at Diablo Vally College (DVC) and Contra Costa College (CCC). In Don Mahan's mythic scheme in chapter 5, the Golden Age was rapidly giving way to the Iron. In chapter 8, we can see the changes hinted at in Beverly Reardon Dutra's sense of how relations with faculty changed when Contra Costa College left the intimate surroundings of the old shipyard and moved to the sprawling campus on the hill. DVC experienced disconcerting growth in students, faculty, and programs. (The year this writer was hired, 1964, DVC added seven new full-time English instructors, almost doubling the size of the department.)

In the small group of college elders that the new president, Jack Carhart, brought together to work on plans for Los Medanos, it is no surprise that we find some of the key figures who had helped shape DVC in the early days—most notably Dick Worthen and John Porterfield. Carhart proclaimed that his college “would not be a duplication of any other institution.” Yet, we can see parallels with what had come before and an effort to recapture what had made the other colleges so special in their heady, early days.

One of the remarkable aspects of the LMC story is the Kellogg Program in which a corps of young, new teachers were trained how to teach in this idealistic atmosphere. They went on to greatness, in both the classroom and in administrative positions. Richard Livingston, who has taught journalism and served in a variety of administrative positions at LMC and the District Office, is one of the program's outstanding graduates and a keen observer of how his college evolved.

INNOVATIVE” IS A MUCH OVER-USED adjective in our culture. Yet, Los Medanos College, when it opened in 1974, was a truly innovative community college. The innovations were not haphazard. Most were carefully planned by the college's founders, led by President Jack Carhart.

Planning for the college began in the mid-1960s. The Governing Board directed that planning begin for the Camp Stoneman site on the Antioch-Pittsburg border for what was simply called “East Campus.” College-bound residents in the eastern part of Contra Costa County, an area mingling a rich agriculture with a dense concentration of heavy industry, had long been required to commute some distance to nearby community colleges. In fact, the District at that time had three buses to transport East County students to DVC. Residents wanted a local, convenient campus, reflecting the needs and pride of East County communities.

In the 1970s, Carhart and Founding Dean Charles Collins described the area: “The campus of Los Medanos College overlooks the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. It also looks down on a lot of taxable wealth. The roster of industries that dot the banks of this tributary to the San Francisco Bay reads like the Dow-Jones Industrial Index. . . . It is not a poor district but the upper middle class and rich people do not live in the towns which LMC serves. The students are the children—and the parents—of working class families. They work in those plants and mills; they do not own them. They are good people but most don’t come to college with rich educational and cultural backgrounds. Often they are the first in their families to venture into college.”

The Governing Board named Carhart president of the yet-to-be-named third District college in December 1970, a full three and one-half years before the college actually opened in September 1974. Chancellor Karl Drexel was determined that the new college keep pace with its sister colleges, “but that it should also be different, in keeping with the best current thinking in educational design.” He noted that “creating a new college is like starting a new life, or turning over a new leaf. There is time and opportunity to consider past mistakes and to begin to forge a rationale for why the college exists and what it purports to do.” Carhart himself was not convinced that most community colleges were structured adequately to maximize student learning. As he planned LMC, he had time to travel Canada and the United States looking at educational practices and physical facilities to avoid or to imitate or modify.

Chester Case, one of the college’s founding administrators, and later its second president, noted that “Los Medanos College was bound to reflect

the times in which the formative planning was undertaken. This was in the late '60s and the early '70s, which were times of challenge to institutions of higher education, and the lessons of turbulence and flux were forcibly brought home. Conflicts between student and institution, society and institution resounded with calls for relevance, equity, minority and ethnic rights. The role of higher education was under severe questioning, and the credibility of social institutions was shaken.”

Carhart had a group of trusted advisors, with ties to DVC or the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, which he used as a sounding board to test the validity of his innovative ideas. The group met monthly in Concord for two years for in-depth discussions about every aspect of community college education, with a particular emphasis on curriculum and governance. Carhart said recently that the process was set up so that “we questioned everything and accepted nothing.”

Founding Dean Charles Collins stated, “The best way to start a new college is to ask a lot of probing questions. The college had the unusual opportunity to do this well before it opened its doors. The questions its founders asked were radical. No practice was considered immune to challenge, no tradition was held sacred, no new possibility was rejected out-of-hand as unthinkable.”

Collins, writing in the late 1980s, described Carhart’s advisors as follows: “It was the most exciting intellectual engagement in which I ever participated. We tried to lay out the philosophic goals for the college and then structure curriculum, instruction, personnel selection policies, and governance to be compatible with these philosophic ends. All of us were serious thinkers in the field of community college education; all of us had decades of experience behind us; all of us had strong and often differing views and were articulate defenders of our position; each of us respected—even loved—the others but enjoyed nothing better than doing intellectual battle with worthy opponents . . .”

Writing in 1976, Case described the process thusly: “From the experience of other institutions, from the dialog among educators and social analysts, from the promptings of the community, and from the hard work and inspirations of the planning group, a design for Los Medanos College emerged. The college would not be a duplication of previous institutions.

As envisioned by the planners, it would have aspects of distinctive newness, as well as aspects of the time proven.”

Collins called Carhart “the dominant force in both formulating and implementing” the LMC philosophy, which he called “strong, consistent, coherent, administration-initiated and effective.” In planning LMC, Carhart induced innovation, based on that coherent educational philosophy, in virtually every area of the institution—curriculum, the physical structure, administration, governance, and human resources.

Curriculum

A REPORT WRITTEN BY CASE in 1976 noted that when the college opened two years earlier, like most community colleges, it offered transfer courses and programs in general education, career education (technical/vocational), continuing education, enrichment and skill development (developmental). But as a new institution, LMC “had the opportunity to impose an overall design on the instructional program, the essence of which can be expressed in two philosophical postulates: (1) all knowledge is interrelated; and (2) the learner is the focal point.”

General education was designed to offer “an integrated learning experience.” It attempted to:

- help the learner to learn how to learn;
- infuse the curriculum with contemporary societal issues;
- promote working out a “world view”;
- focus on the “concerns of women, minorities, and ethnic groups”;
- connect knowledge in an interdisciplinary fashion;
- teach students ethical analysis; and
- promote subject matter study, not for its own sake, but for what it “can tell the learner about the world and himself or herself.”

Carhart recently recalled, “What we wanted was to teach the basic concepts and principles of the disciplines and a methodology of inquiry—all so that students could apply the learning to life’s problems.”

In order to accomplish these lofty goals, the college required students to take a one-unit generic course, which focused on interdisciplinary concepts, in each of six areas, and at least one discipline course in each area. Students were also required to complete “plural pursuits,” which were designed to promote independent study. (For more details on the GE model, see chapter 12, *The Evolution of General Education at Los Medanos College*). Career education included some 17 programs designed to result in entry-level job skills and/or to certificates.

LMC’s initial curriculum received recognition from community college experts in graduate schools at UCLA and the University of Texas and was featured in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*.

At the beginning, there were no entrance requirements at LMC, nor “tracking (placement into courses according to aptitude or skills).” While planning the college, Carhart explained, “Courses will be heterogeneous—untracked. Students will not be segregated on the basis of past performance or test results. Deficiencies in tools of learning will be attended to in workshops taken concomitantly with regular courses; there will be no remedial classes or courses.” Carhart explained recently that while at DVC he had conducted a study of community college student success that showed that the “open door” students, as long as they had adequate support, outperformed the mandatory-placed students—thus his strong commitment to open access. “I found that students placed into a sequence of remedial courses usually never got to the college-level English class,” he said.

Physical Structure

IN APRIL 1962, the District purchased 120 acres of what had been Camp Stoneman as a future college site. Two local bond issues failed, but eventually the state funded the new college. Site development began in fall 1971; classes began in September 1974.

In planning the campus, Carhart had another creative idea—the physical structure of the college should also reflect the founding educational philosophy, as demonstrated by:

- a 175,000-square-foot mega-complex that housed essentially all functions, except physical education;¹
- instructional labs surrounded by classrooms and faculty offices—student-centered focus;
- no solid doors—glass doors symbolized the need for employees to be accessible to students;
- no employee dining room, restrooms, work rooms, etc. (see above); and
- a Learning Resource Center at the literal center of the complex, promoting self-directed and lifelong learning.

Administration

ANOTHER INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF LMC was the idea that the curriculum should essentially determine the administrative structure, and that there should be a flattened hierarchy and a lean management team. Collins noted, “LMC has no dean of instruction, no dean of student personnel, no dean of student activities, no dean of occupational education and no dean of the evening division. Instead, it has four curriculum-based deans who cover all of the functions of the traditional ‘deanery’ that I’ve just named.”

The four deans reported to the college president and had responsibility for both transfer and occupational programs, and several student services programs. Collins called it a “leaner, cheaper administrative structure that gives centrality to the curriculum, which attests to the college’s priorities.”

Case described the approach as “designed to circumvent perennial problems of academic organization.” The management organization was “based on function.” In 1977, Carhart and Collins wrote that “the deans and directors are both educational leaders and the managers of

¹ The complex fit the topography of the site and mitigated against the sometimes harsh weather. But more importantly, it reflected “integration,” since everything was under one roof—general education/transfer, career education, student services, administrative functions, etc. And it symbolized the interdisciplinary focus—all knowledge is interrelated.

their respective areas. They aspire to give intellectual and philosophic leadership to their instructors, as well as serve the management roles of communicator, coordinator, supervisor and evaluator. . . . They are decision-makers within their respective areas and within the boundaries of institutional policy.”

The idea of “integration” was crucial to the founders. Carhart and Collins stated, “This integration is accomplished in many ways. The breakout of the four deans approximates the breakout of the general education areas. They provide leadership to this core of the curricular offering. They also divide among them all of the career fields so the historical separation of academic and career education is bridged. The four deans share the duties of the supervisor of the evening division, thereby integrating the day and evening programs into one. The four deans share duties of the traditional dean of student personnel, thereby integrating the instructional aspects of student personnel into the larger instructional function. The four deans, assisted by the five directors, serve whatever duties that are performed by division heads and department chairpersons in traditional models, thereby countering that centrifugal force which scatters the unity of knowledge into unrelated parts.”

An unusual spinoff of this integrative approach was that LMC hired counseling faculty, each of whose assignment was to both counsel and teach behavioral science (anthropology, psychology, or sociology) classes.

The administrative structure was designed to “flatten the hierarchy and make the communication chain shorter and stronger,” Carhart and Collins wrote. They described the outcome as “a lean team in close communication.”

Another LMC departure from the community college norm was the lack of academic divisions or departments. Writing two years before the college opened, Carhart stated, “The advantages that naturally accrue from close association of those teaching identical or related subjects must not be permitted to crystallize a rigid departmentalization as the dominating college structure. Subject-area affiliation must be consciously leavened by effective groupings of faculty on an interdisciplinary basis that will give primacy to the mission of the college as a whole if fractionalizing is not to become the inevitable concomitant of expansion.”

Collins was even more critical:

Academic departments began as part of the solution and ended up being part of the problem. They were organized in American universities in the latter half of the nineteenth century. . . . Organized as a means to give voice to the faculty in governance of the university, they soon fought to become autonomous fiefdoms within the feudal hierarchy of the university. . . .

When junior colleges began to develop, slowly in the first half of this century and rapidly during the last two decades, they built according to the university model, even though it poorly fitted the purposes of the institution they were building. Community colleges are supposed to be student-centered and learning-oriented, but departments are basically faculty-centered and teaching-oriented. Further, such teaching is viewed as the dissemination of information, usually the means of the formal lecture, and the concomitant attitude is that those who are “college material” will get it and the rest do not belong in college anyway.

So all faculty at LMC were assigned to one of four broad “areas”: behavioral science; biological and physical science; language arts and humanistic studies; and social and economic sciences. Each area was supervised by a dean—there were no division or department chairs. As explained earlier, each area had general education/transfer, occupational, and student services components.

Writing after he retired, Collins noted that “during my tenure at LMC we successfully fought off all attempts to institute departments. This was difficult because instructors are the product of the high specialization they had in their own university education. . . . So, there is a natural proclivity among teachers to want departments and to stay neatly and comfortably within the bounds of their own disciplines.”

After working with the areas for a couple of years, Carhart and Collins wrote: “This model does not negate the fact that there are disciplines, that instructors are prepared in their disciplines, that instructors can profitably talk about their common concerns. Instead, the model posits a dean helping instructors move in an ascending spiral from discipline (speech) to intradiscipline (language arts) to interdiscipline (general education).”

Governance

BEFORE LMC OPENED, Carhart suggested a basis for the governance structure: “Intensive and continual collegewide dialog, implemented by small cross-disciplinary groupings of faculty and students, will be one of the major bases employed for achieving the kind of philosophical consensus that is indispensable for true community of enterprise.” Carhart and Collins indicated that “one question, the answer to which eventually gave the very skeleton to the new model, was this: what is the major source of trouble and contradictions in the traditional governance of community colleges? The answer which was gradually forthcoming was that there is monumental confusion between policy input and management output.”

Collins had a significant influence on the initial approach. He said the effort was needed in order to “clarify some of the murky thinking on governance that is so typical of community college administrators.” He went on to state: “it is a mistake to think that a community college is a democracy in which the staff is the electorate. The only people who are elected are the members of the Governing Board and they are voted for by the people in the community.” He noted that the Board delegates power and authority to the chancellor and presidents. “Staffs should be gently disabused of any notion that the internal governance of the college is a mini-democracy. It is not. The president has the delegated legal power to make decisions. Having said this, it is both politic and wise to give everyone a voice (but not a vote) and to depend heavily on the thinking of the staff. Effort should be made to reach a reasonable consensus. Channels should be established so that the president gets maximum input from every source. However, it should be abundantly clear that after the input has reached the president, it is the president who makes the decision and that once the decision is made there should be comparable channels for ‘output’ so that everyone knows exactly what is going on.”

This approach was based on what can be described as an input-output model. Input was recommendations to the college president, the decision-maker. Output was from the president to the management team and all employees.

Case described the actual structure: “Recommendations arise from . . . a system of ‘clusters’.” There were six clusters, composed of faculty, administrators, and students. “Clusters deliberate on issues, proposals, course proposals, and other topics, and send forward recommendations to a College Policies Committee, which in turn advises the college president. Positive action by the president leads to implementation. If he decides in the negative, he returns the recommendation to the clusters with the rationale for his action. Any ‘cluster person’ can introduce a topic, a question, an opinion, a policy proposal, or a call to action.”

It is noteworthy that the structure did not include:

- classified staff participation;
- involvement of the Academic Senate (and the era was pre-collective bargaining);
- traditional student government—students participated in the clusters; and
- many standing committees.

Case’s view of the structure was that it was “different but not radically so. It acknowledges the legal position and accountability of the chief administrative officer and describes the management team as a service agency charged with implementation. It involves faculty, administration, and students in the business of the college in a process of deliberation and recommendation which is comprehensive, but inescapably slow. Because the system challenges some traditions, its implementation required a great deal of explication, analysis, and adjustment among those involved in it.”

Collins believed that the model “is what most staff really want. They wanted to have a voice; to know that their voices would be heard and taken seriously; wanted a strong, decisive president; and wanted to be clear on what the decision was and what the rationale for the decision was. That is how decision-making operated at LMC.” His evaluation included the assertion that “it worked because everybody was involved and everyone knew what was going on.”

Looking at the administrative and governance structures taken together, Carhart and Collins asserted the success of the model—it:

- establishes a college posture of high structure to achieve defined goals;
- is compatible with and supportive of the curriculum of the college;
- cherishes participatory input and capitalizes on it;
- makes clear and unconfused the legal and logical authority of the president as decision-maker;
- recognizes the ultimate priority of institutional will over individual will;
- shortens the lines of communication and gives maximum assurance that everyone knows what is going on;
- creates a flattened, lean hierarchy;
- decentralizes the student personnel function;
- largely erases the demarcation between academic and career education;
- integrates day and evening programs, as well as integrating community services with curricular offerings and student activities; and
- does away with departments and divisions.

Human Resources

WHEN THE FOUNDERS were planning LMC, they recognized that teaching personnel would play a key role in implementing innovation at the college. However, they generally agreed that available candidates lacked preparation for the job at hand. Case noted, “Typically, the candidate was at best lopsided in preparation: heavy on what to teach, but light on how to teach.” He later wrote, “The argument for the preparation of community college instructors is suffused with a special urgency. The need for professionally prepared instructors is already acute and will become more so. Changing student clienteles are bringing new needs to the classroom. Knowledge in all fields is expanding. . . . Instructors are called upon to implement new technologies of instruction and curricular design.”

Case added, “The community college’s ‘proud myth’ is that it is a teaching institution. The calling of the instructor is to teach effectively to a student clientele almost dizzying in its diversity. But to teach effectively in today’s community college requires a wide repertoire of instructional skills, abiding sensitivities, familiarization with various curricular designs, knowledge of the student, an awareness of the realities of the institution, and a commitment to its goals. These are not the kinds of things that a person usually picks up along the way to becoming a community college instructor. They are not part of the undergraduate or graduate major, nor of the occupational training and experiences that presently ‘credential’ and ‘certify’ persons as qualified community college instructors.”

Collins observed that neither the universities nor the schooling of unguided experience were preparing faculty to effectively perform the challenging role of contemporary community college instructor. Therefore, Carhart, Case, and Collins proposed that “the college itself should take on the responsibility for preparing its own instructors.” They proposed a model for an “on-site, campus-conducted, systematic program for instructor development.”

To bring the idea to fruition, in 1972, the college applied for, and received, a \$233,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to develop and implement a “faculty induction” model. It was designed to “prepare inexperienced, but high-potential, diverse persons for the role of instructor.” Collins, who wrote the grant, said: “I successfully argued that the best place for otherwise well-educated people to learn the pedagogy of teaching was on-the-job while teaching.” He also noted that LMC “needed and wanted women, Blacks, Latinos and other young people irrespective of sex

“... To teach effectively in today’s community college requires a wide repertoire of instructional skills, abiding sensitivities, familiarization with various curricular designs, knowledge of the student, an awareness of the realities of the institution, and a commitment to its goals.” –Chet Case, LMC founding administrator

or ethnicity. I argued that since they would be inexperienced, they would be low on the salary schedule” and the savings could partially offset the cost of the professional development program.

The grant had goals for the instructor (dubbed “Kellogg Fellows”), the college, and the program:

- For the instructor—to develop skills and knowledge in curriculum design, instructional strategies, communication, and interpersonal relations; to become an effective faculty member; to understand the goals and philosophy of the community college in general and LMC in particular; and to be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student body.
- For the college—to facilitate achievement of affirmative action goals; to underscore the importance of instruction and the student in the college’s operation; to explore and critique the goals, philosophy, policy and procedures of the college.
- For the program—to pilot a project to test the workability and ultimate “exportability” of the induction model; to study the cost effectiveness of the model.

The college hired Chet Case, then at the School of Education at UC Berkeley, as professional development facilitator (PDF) to head up the program. Collins called him “a natural-born PDF . . . uniquely talented to train teachers.” It was a full-time administrative position, which reported to the college president.

Case described the roles of the PDF as “teacher, role model, counselor, consultant and critic/catalyst.” The position was designed to be completely separate from the faculty evaluation process.

Case set up a model that provided 20 percent reassigned time for each fellow for one year in order to attend a three-week pre-service seminar, a regular seminar (two to three hours per week), and workshops during the academic year and to work with the PDF on individual projects. The fellows were required to be new, or almost new, to community college teaching. Case called them people with “little experience but with high potential (as predicted by the selection process).” He characterized the fellows as “a group rich in diversity, in age, ethnicity, sex, experiences, teaching fields

and points of view.” Carhart recently described them as “young and energetic—but experience was not a prerequisite. We wanted people who were well educated and ambitious, that’s all.”

Collins, a former UC professor, had important input into the planning for Kellogg. He wrote later that “taking graduate courses in education never taught anybody to be a good teacher. What is necessary is to learn principles and application concurrently; to be taught learning theory, course conceptualization, lesson planning, even some pedagogical tricks and then go try them in the classroom.”

Some 40 LMC instructors—more than half of the original faculty group—went through the program from 1973 to 1976. Case called it a “socialization process. It is induction to something. In this case, it is largely induction to the role of instructor, with very particular application to the role in the context of Los Medanos College. Because LMC is new and because it features many non-traditional aspects in organization, structure and curriculum, induction is straight forward and to the point—there is a very great deal that a faculty person needs to learn to fit into the college scheme of things.”

But he also noted that “the induction program is not so short-sighted as to focus only on the immediate needs and role expectations of the college; it also touches on the larger socialization to the generalized role of community college instructor. The virtue of the induction model is that it puts socialization in a context and defines the fellow as an active participant in the process.”

Outside evaluators concluded that the program had been very positive—“the data showed that the participants grew professionally, personally and as faculty members.” They termed Kellogg “remarkably successful.”

After the program ended, Case stated that “yesterday’s fellows at LMC are in the solid core of outstanding instructors who are conspicuous in giving institutional leadership, developing curriculum, relating to students and providing effective instruction.”

Case wrote that a byproduct of Kellogg was “the establishment and perpetuation of institutional norms that stress the centrality of instruction and respect for student needs, that underscore and affirm the importance of experimentation and flexibility, and that put a positive connotation on the concept of continuing development and growth for faculty members and administrators.” He concluded, “Experience with the induction pro-

gram provides an answer to the question, ‘Who will prepare instructors for service in today’s community college?’ The answer is: the colleges themselves.”

Collins’s evaluation was that “as a group, those who had been Kellogg Fellows became the best instructors that LMC had.” A number of the fellows went on to be considered master teachers at the college and/or became academic administrators.

Case summed up the college’s early approach to human resources: “LMC stepped away from the conventional ‘safe’ approach to staffing the new college. The induction model was installed, and from it grew the comprehensive staff development program. . . . Today, staff development is an integral part of the life of the college.”

The Kellogg program also established an atmosphere that meant “that we were a learning college—not just for students, but for all employees,” Carhart said.

Postscript

IN THE THREE AND ONE-HALF DECADES since LMC opened, most of the initial innovations have evolved, or even been abandoned. However, much of the founding philosophy remains. Writing about philosophy after retirement, Collins observed, “Philosophy is not a project or a program or something you present to people on a platter. It is the cement that hardens over the years to hold everything together. It permeates the curriculum, the student personnel program, the attitude toward students, the relationships with staff, the governance model by which the college operates—everything. For better or worse, every college eventually develops what can loosely be called an institutional philosophy. . . . The LMC philosophy was strong, coherent, administration initiated and effective.”

11

C H A P T E R



Interior of the Diablo Valley College Book Center, 2008

Defining General Education in the Social Sciences at Diablo Valley College

Beverly Reardon Dutra

One of the perennial activities of the colleges is trying to define general education (GE) for purposes of identifying graduation requirements. Bob Martincich, a former dean of instruction, observed that the process has become largely a protection of turf that allows various disciplines to ensure enrollments. It is, nevertheless, a vital process that instructors need to do periodically to remind themselves where they fit in the overall operation of the college.

Beverly Reardon Dutra reminds us that there was a time when defining general education was much more vital to the college—when GE defined the relationship of Diablo Valley College (DVC) to the student. Undoubtedly, the way GE was approached at the college had a great deal to do with the idealism of the founding leaders, who had conceived of the place as a people’s college in the aftermath of World War II. General education also became a calculated response to the struggle against the first superintendent, Drummond McCunn.

At DVC, general education was filled with a democratic spirit, symbolized by the open-door general education philosophy, eloquently described here by Dutra and John Porterfield. It stood in stark contrast to the authoritarian approach to education embodied in Superintendent McCunn, who attempted to manage the education of the colleges from the top down. GE, in contrast, was nonhierarchical, encouraged collaborative decision making, and taught students critical thinking skills. Most important, it was celebrated as unique to DVC. For many years, the two-course sequence Dutra describes here, Social Science 110 and 111, was the last reminder of the glory days at DVC.

WHEN I JOINED the Social Science area in 1961, general education at DVC was in full flower. A GE-required course existed in pride of place in every academic area. Hired as the first psychologist to participate in this integrative program, I joined teachers with backgrounds in history, anthropology, sociology, geography, economics, and political science. All of them taught general education courses as well as standard academic social science courses. The other psychologists on campus were assigned as counselors and staffed a vital, well-run student personnel program, which included a college orientation course that all students were strongly encouraged to take.

The general education two-course offering called Social Science 110 and 111 used assorted social science disciplines to achieve its main goal: the formation of “informed, inquiring, critical minds” (John Porterfield, quoting economist and educator Carl Kaysen). The approach was integrated, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary. Developed and maintained with

team consensus, curricular and text decisions were made by the group, with individualization expressed in actual teaching.

Social Science 110 and 111 was a superb place for a young teacher to learn how to deal with complex subjects in a complex learning environment. Social Science 110 started with a look at biological and neurological foundations of human growth, proceeded through psychological developmental processes, went on to explore the language and approaches of the anthropological study of man's culture, and then moved into social behavior of individuals and groups. Using the particular perspectives and language of these various disciplines, classes examined the basic institutions of family, school, and church. In the second semester, Social Science 111 used economic and political institutions to continue the integrated analysis. It was not only a different way of organizing knowledge compared to standard college courses, but it also applied this interdisciplinary view to an innovative problem-solving style that used many sources, perspectives, and alternatives.

In 1964, Social Science area members Bruce Watson and William Tarr published *The Social Sciences and American Civilization*. This successful book supported these interdisciplinary courses by focusing on the interrelatedness of knowledge in the social sciences, then selecting major themes and concepts from the behavioral sciences and applying them to the various trends and institutions of American civilization. To aid the interdisciplinary problem-solving approach, the authors designed the book "to be discussed and argued." The focus on critical thinking was useful to both students and colleagues.

Social Science 110 and 111 met the mandate of the American Institutions and Ideals education code, which meant they fulfilled accreditation requirements for transfer to California universities and colleges. They were wildly popular with students, too, who appreciated the new, dramatically different approach to satisfying transfer demands, and soundly supported by counselor direction and guidance. With the focus on critical thinking and a multidisciplinary approach, students were also able to get beyond any negativity they may have picked up in standard mandatory civics and history education. Plus, they came to perceive the relevance of the mate-

rial to their own lives, in becoming fully functioning individuals and well-informed, thinking citizens. Thus, general education at DVC as executed by the Social Science area was viewed as providing a strong foundation for the democratic values essential to the survival of society.

A Larger World View

TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC MODELS and majors require mastery over a single body of research, including the language of that discipline and the styles of research basic to that field. As social science instructors at DVC, we saw ourselves as generalists, which meant we took a larger world view that looked beyond the confines of conventional academic disciplines. Students were asked to think in different ways, to apply styles of thought and factual information from a variety of disciplines, and to bring those insights to bear on issues large and small. Within these interdisciplinary guidelines, teachers and students were encouraged to seek multiple answers and perspectives, to weigh alternatives, and to apply discriminating critical thought to any decision making. Instructors were encouraged to use this same approach whenever they engaged in broader campus policy.

As a new instructor, I learned quickly that I must figure out a variety of ways of translating difficult concepts and theories into pragmatic use for students. At the same time, I had to find ways of individualizing the instructional process for a variety of student needs, interests, and abilities. It was a formidable but very rewarding challenge. I learned that DVC's open-door general education philosophy was a part of every instructional and institutional action. Throughout the campus, this philosophical attitude pervaded text selection, materials preparation, test construction, and attitudes about a variety of decisions, such as scheduling, staffing, and campus activities. Teachers possessed very real ownership of what they were teaching. It was not enough to say "I can do this"; you had to become practiced at executing the philosophy at many levels. There seemed to be a constant reaffirmation of commitment to the philosophy and its special styles of teaching and campus governance. Senior teachers consistently demonstrated the ability to focus beyond themselves into consideration of

what was good for the school as a whole. I was learning as much, or more, as my students.

A 1963 written statement by John Porterfield helps to explain the depths of the open-door view:

If the junior college as we know it has a symbol, it is the Open Door. The concept and structure for which this symbol stands has been called the most significant innovation in American education in the twentieth century. Although it did not originate in this state, it is widely regarded as California's greatest contribution to American education. If it will only press its advantage, the California public junior college is in a unique position of potential power and influence. We and we alone can capitalize upon the opportunity that goes with being at once a part of public secondary education and of higher education. As the former we can have the advantage of flexibility, of closeness to the public, of community identification, of a commitment to give everybody a chance. As the latter we participate in the advantages of the academic tradition, of academic freedom and responsibility, of intellectual leadership. It is up to us to make what we will of this advantage—or to abandon it. There is at once a price and a reward here. For the junior college is still, in many significant ways, a pioneer institution. And so it is an institution in which only those who have some of the vision, the enthusiasm, the restlessness and the venturesomeness of pioneers will really feel comfortable. There is more adventure than security here, if we are thinking of the kind of security that resides in established ways, clear-cut patterns, and long-accepted traditions. But, we do have the security of a clear objective and an accepted mission expressed in a meaningful symbol—the Open Door. For the sake of that objective and that mission I urge upon all of us that we resist all efforts to close that door—even a little.

I found that the vitality of these general education courses required a submersion of self by the teacher. Each of us developed strong relationships with other teachers who were building course content and materials. Trust levels were high. Participation forced a kind of humility to the group's consensual decisions. Ideas were explored from many other areas

Academic ranking, research, and distance from students were discarded as archaic ideas. A kind of “reverse snobbery” existed that held that a teaching institution provided a far superior learning environment to what was available at most four-year schools.

of the college, such as communication and linguistic theory, art, literature, drama, and biology. Actual teaching was not that much different from a traditional academic system, but it was the sense of investment in the course and involvement in the total college philosophy that produced such a charged and rewarding atmosphere. Our focus was on teaching; our sense of identity was attached to being called a teacher or instructor. Student success was important. Academic ranking, research, and distance from students were discarded as archaic ideas. A kind of “reverse snobbery” existed that held that a teaching institution provided a far superior learning environment to what was available at most four-year

schools. The University of California system and other state colleges happily accepted Social Science 110 and 111 as fulfillment of the state education code’s accreditation requirements. And, our transferring students did well.

Teacher Course Loads

THE PHILOSOPHY IS PRACTICALLY DEMONSTRATED by the fact that Social Science 110 or 111 represented at least half, or more, of the Social Science area courses taught by each teacher. Other disciplines, such as sociology or history, were placed in the background, with only a small number of offerings. It was assumed that students would take the latter courses during their second year, as their interests and major choices emerged. Many of these courses were numbered in the 200s to structure and guide student selection. A typical semester might have 28 to 30 sections of Social Science 110, with 12 or so sections of Social Science 111, while other, more traditional courses would have from one to four sections. To further enhance student success,

the majority of instructors participated in the student registration process so they would be available to answer any questions.

Karl Drexel, president and later superintendent, constantly encouraged this service to students and writes about Board instructions in the early years: "In every aspect of operation the Board's Instructions to staff were that the controlling criterion in decision making was to be the interest of the student" (Drexel, K., "The First Twenty-Five Years of the Contra Costa Community College District," undated). I took that view to heart, remembering always my own student days, and tried never to forget it.

Because the larger institutional environment was so supportive of general education and open-door egalitarian values, it is impossible to describe the process of teaching Social Science 110 and 111 without looking at the total college setting. The larger school provided the context for shared customs, agreements, and understandings. We were thoroughly enmeshed as both individual teachers and Social Science area colleagues in the many tasks that supported the basic tenets of the philosophy.

I learned much from John Porterfield, Charles Manley, Bill Tarr, Len Grote, Bruce Watson, Mike Hooper, Norris Pope, and Chuck Sapper. All of them generously modeled how to do this special kind of teaching. Ideas were incorporated from other areas of the college, as noted above. In the wider campus, senior faculty like Dick Worthen, Bill Miller, Lee Armstrong, Bess Whitcomb, Liz Johnson, Marge Smith, Helen Lindgren, Jane Castellanos, Gene Thomas, and many others freely offered wisdom from their disciplines. This sense of unity, within and without our own teaching area, supported the view that we were helping to build students who could cope intelligently with the future. The entire faculty modeled a strong ethic with responsibility to students and the institution as a whole.

The unifying sense of purpose had been given a solid foundation by the first DVC president, Leland Medsker, which was, in turn, aptly translated by Deans of Instruction Reed Buffington and George Madison. The particular talent of these individuals, as with many DVC administrators, was the ability to clearly identify general education goals and methods and then to translate them into classroom activity or campus governance. Throughout

the college, they were able to maintain a frame of reference and an atmosphere that supported and rewarded generalist teaching styles.

“Although the District Superintendent and Board held conventional and autocratic views of leadership, immediate campus administrative leadership guided teachers with a set of expectations that resulted in a unifying sense of purpose that was very positive for students” (Tarr, W. Doctoral Thesis, 1971). John Porterfield, social science teacher and past president of Contra Costa College, and Karl Drexel, college president and later District superintendent, urged that we all act in consonance with the college’s stated goals. It made sense that our classes had the foundation of a clearly understood institutional philosophy. As I moved forward, teaching and learning to become an active member of this wonderful community, I was constantly amazed at the truth and effectiveness of their guidance. The open-door philosophy set an attitude, and the permissiveness and challenges implicit in the philosophy built and rebuilt its successes.

Articulating the Philosophy

IN MY EXPERIENCE AT DVC, administrators and support staff did all that was possible to facilitate this teaching orientation. Administrators were able to articulate the philosophy clearly to teachers as well as to the local community. They also were in high demand to explain the college’s special approach to general education to statewide professional organizations. Karl Drexel, John Porterfield, and Dick Worthen were renowned for their ability to communicate pragmatic solutions. Teachers at campus level were treated evenly and professionally by the administration. They, in turn, treated students in the same manner. The majority of support staff were socialized into this collegial world. When working well, the atmosphere was one of cooperation, with behavior well modeled for any newcomers.

To sustain such an environment, faculty and administrators met formally and informally on a regular and continuing basis. The very active participation in college governance was a perfect example of the undergirding philosophy for Social Science 110 and 111. Numerous faculty meetings, twice monthly cross-disciplinary discussion-group sessions, and subject-area meetings kept

communications open. Discussions ranged from college governance issues to subject matter, books, local and national politics, films, campus speakers, and performances, as well as teaching techniques and approaches. All opinions were welcome. Faculty openly maintained a sense of community and mutual trust. No-holds-barred arguments merged into multidisciplinary solutions. It was easy to understand who we were and what we believed by the tenor and content of our shared language. The coffee room, the cafeteria, group offices, outside benches, the gym, and faculty homes were all places that you could find relevant conversation. Faculty and students pursued similar discussions. The Arts and Lecture series brought national and international scholars and performers. Campus schedules were built with an open hour to facilitate the large number of meetings. Regular town hall meetings were called on a variety of issues. Held at noon, these meetings offered students, faculty, and administrators and staff a forum to express their views and be treated with respect. The open door operated in many ways. There was a great deal of institutionalized nurturance for pursuing the all-encompassing needs of a student-oriented, community-oriented, general education, open-door educational campus. DVC was a strong institution because the established customs were both understood *and* practiced.

Teachers did not seem to have a self-identity tied to the usual academic research or specialization models. From early days, John Porterfield shared his insights about general education, which had great influence on me. Here he restates some ideas for a new group of teachers:

General education is our particular province. For example, probably none of us has really exploited the possibilities for enhancing general education inherent in our counseling emphasis. But most important of all, the community colleges are relatively free from the specialization and over-departmentalization and other impediments to good teaching that often afflict senior colleges and universities. And right here is the heart of the matter. General education stands or falls with teaching quality. What in your teaching experience had most impact? It is extremely likely that it wasn't any activity, any body of subject matter, any laboratory, any book, or even the whole library. It was a small number of peers and a bare handful of memorable teachers. That's

what made it all worthwhile. And that's what general education is all about. (Porterfield, 1975).

Porterfield goes on to say:

General education is [a] partner, not a rival of career education. In fact, they are intimately related. If the goal of general education is the formation of informed, inquiring, and critical minds, there is wide agreement that considerations of individual and social welfare give this goal at least as high a priority as that of learning a marketable skill. In fact, without some degree of these qualities attending, no skill is marketable (1975).

Although we held to the grounding principle of general education, teachers were supportive of the strong vocational programs on campus. The tremendous mutual aid is perfectly exemplified by physical education instructors deliberately taking large class loads so that communication/English instructors could work more profitably with small-class sizes.

Instructors worked far beyond their actual classrooms to build learning environments that nurtured learners. No student was tracked or labeled according to abilities. If help in skills improvement was needed, then such help was made available in informal and formal settings. Open door meant opening the door to open access and equality of opportunity. A former Board member was fond of saying that junior colleges were better than jails, but he missed the profound impact such quality education had in improving local communities and individuals' life options, and creating better citizens for a democratic society.

What was expected of an instructor by his or her peers and the administration was the same: excellence in teaching, involvement in campus activities (both professional and student), and contributions to the local community in some meaningful way. Most faculty members were immersed in a lively, thoughtful academic community. Frequent social activities helped to forge deep friendships and loyalties. Such gatherings also provided additional opportunities to discuss course or campus issues. Always, the focus was on what best served students. Administrators were

viewed as facilitators, not adversaries. I never had an administrator fail to help me. The faculty participated in decisions about course content, structure and development of curriculum, and a variety of topics around process-based education. Years of educational experience and knowledge were shared and applied openly with a sense of togetherness. Most faculty members believed that they understood all that was needed to support general education as it was executed at DVC. Many of them also believed that DVC was the best community college in California. That deep sense of pride helped to sustain everyone.

The idea of putting students' needs first can be seen in how class schedules were put together in the Social Science area in the 1960s. The schedule for the upcoming semester was placed on a blackboard in front of all area teachers. Classes were blocked across days and hours to facilitate student-scheduling needs. Only after what was best for the students was determined did faculty members begin to choose their teaching loads. Except for some specialty teaching in Far Eastern or world history, *all* social science instructors taught various combinations of the Social Science 110 and 111 series. The dean of instruction then reviewed the schedule to insure it meshed well with the offerings from other discipline areas, which used similar scheduling models. During the 1970s, areas became departments, divisions appeared, and scheduling took the opposite approach: instructor subject and hourly wishes were the highest criteria. As old academic models began to rear their heads, instructor choices took precedence.

The idea of putting students' needs first can be seen in how class schedules were put together in the Social Science Area in the 1960s.

Camelot of Teaching Spirit

THE SECRET OF DVC in the 1960s was in the teaching. It was a “teaching institution,” a concept all understood. The underlying strength of the secret was having strong teachers—people who grasped the nature of learning and did all they could to facilitate successful learning in one another, in stu-

dents, and in the way the institution steered and monitored its basic guidelines. Counselors and student personnel services also contributed important support to this open-door concept.

But by the early 1970s, much had changed in the world and on campus. Newer faculty perceived the academic world differently and applied different sets of values. General education was no longer valued or understood and was perceived as too difficult to teach. In the process, much was lost: a true sense of community, teaching and learning that focused on examining the whole human being, the opportunity for egalitarian success and mobility, the encouragement of the confident view of productive, satisfying life work; and the training of thoughtful citizen voters with lifelong commitments to positive community lives. The age-old institutionalized model of distinct divisions of knowledge reappeared in great strength. John Porterfield describes what that meant for teachers who had flourished at DVC: “For better or worse, colleges and particularly universities have committed themselves to departmentalization and specialization, and the trend shows no sign of abating. General or integrative education depends heavily upon the availability of good teaching at the hands of competent generalists—and neither generalists nor good teachers are consistently encouraged or rewarded in the dominant ethos.” [John Porterfield, circa 1975]

Not surprisingly, this dramatic change in organization serves those whom it has always served and ignores the population that benefits most from access to the kind of general education once provided at DVC. The reality is that most students do not graduate from four-year institutions, and the quality of our commitments is lessened when we do not provide critical thinking skills to the majority of people who live in Contra Costa County.

I truly believe that the DVC gestalt that was alive in the 1950s and 1960s is needed now more than ever. Viewed as a kind of “Camelot of teaching spirit,” those attitudes, beliefs, and styles could do much to improve current educational and social problems.

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CHAPTER



Los Medanos College students in the college library, 2008

The Evolution of General Education at Los Medanos College

Richard Livingston

“General education is one of those concepts, like democracy or justice, that everyone is for until it gets explicitly defined—or worse, until a serious effort is made to put it into practice. Then commitment to general education becomes harder to sustain.”

—Los Medanos College founders, circa 1974

In this insightful article, Richard Livingston documents the gradual evolution of the general education (GE) program at Los Medanos College (LMC). We can see a straight line from the GE program at Diablo Valley

College (DVC), described in the essay by Beverly Reardon Dutra, to what emerged at LMC years later. By 1974, some of the forces Dutra outlines had significantly affected how GE was perceived at DVC. The college elders President Jack Carhart sought out to assist him in planning LMC included a number of people who had been instrumental in establishing the original GE program at DVC.

Livingston's account is particularly useful in showing us how and why general education changed over the decades. He shows us how the students' response to the original generic courses changed the process. Later, pressure from the state universities altered what was done. This longitudinal study shows us the wisdom of Bob Martincich's observation that defining general education is an ongoing process, as necessary for the faculty and staff as it is for the students.

The Theory

LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE'S APPROACH to general education evolved in an era of social and intellectual turmoil—the early 1970s. Once the Governing Board decided to build a third college in the Contra Costa Community College District (District), it appointed Jack Carhart, in December 1970, to head up the yet-to-be-named college. Thus, the institution had a president, a full three and one-half years before it actually opened. The chancellor, Board, and President Carhart agreed that the new college should not be a run-of-the-mill community college. Writing in 1972, Carhart noted that “opening a new college in the 1970s is a formidable task. . . . Any college established in the period of radical transition must be fluid, dynamic, and open to repeated change and reorientation.”

Initially, Carhart did not have a college, or even a staff. But he had the luxury of time to plan. He was able to travel the country, meet with key educational leaders, and develop a list of “best practices” that could be used (or modified for use) at the new college. In the process, he developed a keen interest in general education. Carhart saw GE as the underpinning of all the rest of the curriculum and believed that a college should not give “insti-

tutional endorsement” of a degree to any student who was not “reasonably literate” in all the fields of basic human knowledge.

Carhart realized that he needed a group to serve as a sounding board for his curricular and structural ideas, so he formed an informal “kitchen cabinet” of respected educators from Diablo Valley College and the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. Key members of the group were Charles Collins, Lenard Grote, Leland Medsker, John Porterfield, and Dick Worthen. Chancellor Karl Drexel often joined in the spirited discussions of the group, frequently over drinks and dinner. Meeting regularly for two years, the group hammered out an educational philosophy, which led to an innovative approach to general education. Writing some 15 years later, Charles Collins stated, “Our task was to build the basic philosophic structure upon which this new college was to rest. It was the most exciting intellectual engagement in which I ever participated.”

In terms of general education, the group focused on a simple, yet complex, question: What should a well-educated person know? In wrestling with the question, the members gradually developed key aspects of a philosophy of general education:

- Some things are more important to learn than other things.
- The most important things to learn are those that affect everybody and, therefore, should be learned by everybody.
- The world is “all of a piece.” A complex world requires a complex, interconnected view of it.
- A world view provides a “frame,” which makes all smaller perceptions more accurate.
- The general citizenry is capable of developing this complex view of the complex world.
- Since knowledge, like the world, changes and grows more complex, students need to know how to learn even more than they need to learn a body of facts.
- Knowledge of facts is necessary but becomes operative only in understanding the interrelationships of the most basic of these facts.

- It is inherent in life that the individual, the group, the society face a succession of problems, which makes the end product of knowledge and thinking, the action that will solve these problems.
- The progression is from disciplinary facts to intradisciplinary understanding to interdisciplinary attacks upon complex problems.
- Societal problems come to the fore or recede according to their gravity. If society's survival, or human survival or planet survival, is in jeopardy, then every college curriculum must become a "curriculum for survival." Collins wrote that attention must be paid "to a much more chilling and dramatic societal goal—survival of humanity and of the earth upon which humanity abides."
- Deciding on action in the solving of problems is an ethical act; therefore, ethical inquiry becomes a necessary part of the whole process of learning.
- General education is for everyone—therefore, courses at an open-door college should avoid prerequisites or other barriers to access. Carhart stated that GE courses will be "heterogeneous—untracked. Students will not be segregated on the basis of past performance or test results."

During hundreds of hours of discussion, the participants took these general concepts and developed a curriculum and a structure for general education at Los Medanos College—the board had adopted the name at its November 1971 meeting.

The initial GE structure was based on requiring students to take courses in six broad categories: behavioral sciences, biological sciences, humanistic studies, language arts, physical sciences, and social sciences—much like traditional breadth requirements. However, the actual approach was quite radical.

Each broad area had a one-unit (18 instructional hours) "generic" course that covered the major concepts within the disciplines in the area and the interrelationships of those disciplines. It also emphasized "pluralism" ("ethnic and women's perspectives to be specifically included"), ethical analysis, and the societal implications of the knowledge. These generic courses were lecture-based and were large, typically 90 to 120 students. The courses were planned by teams but taught by one of the discipline's instructors.

Concurrently, students were to be enrolled in one GE discipline course within the broad area. These three-unit (or more, in the sciences) sections typically enrolled about 30 students and emphasized considerably more instructor-student interaction. They also required students to complete a “plural pursuit,” which was defined as “an integral part of the course that allows the student to pursue an area of interest concerned with ethnic studies, women’s perspectives, occupational exploration, or other areas selected from a variety of learning processes. The focus of this plural pursuit should provide students [with] experience in designing their own education.” The pursuits were sometimes traditional term papers but creativity was encouraged, and some students opted for multi-media projects or performance presentations. The model stated that “each student-designed special project would have as a target the development of personal identity and the capacity to see self vis-à-vis the world.”

The discipline courses were broad survey courses—an introduction to the field—but limited in number. Collins noted, “LMC policy was to have a lean, non-proliferating curriculum. We rejected completely and unequivocally the idea of the so-called cafeteria style general education.” The model called for “the content of the discipline course to be related—where possible even synchronized—to the concepts and principles being covered in the generic course,” although this was sometimes problematic when the courses were actually being taught.

For example, here is one component of the general education structure: The large behavioral science generic course had three related “break out” sections in anthropology, psychology, and/or sociology. At LMC, there were a fairly limited number of discipline options in each subject area.

The founders also envisioned creation of an “inter-disciplinary colloquy,” although this aspect of the model was not in place during the early years of the college. The idea was to create sophomore-level courses that would “build on the constant investigation into societal implications” in GE courses and produce “a deepening dialog focused on the societal issues, their ethical dimensions and options for social change.”

So LMC had an innovative general education model ready to implement; but success, of course, would primarily depend on the quality of the yet-to-be-hired faculty. Carhart and Collins wrote a grant application to the W.K.

Kellogg Foundation for professional development. The foundation allocated \$225,000 (a considerable sum in those days) to LMC in order to “induct” relatively inexperienced instructors into the role of college faculty members. According to Collins, the premise was simple: “The best place for otherwise well-educated people to learn the pedagogy of teaching was on-the-job while teaching.” So the college hired young, inexperienced master’s-qualified instructors, with an emphasis on diversity. They were full-time instructors with a reduced load so that they could meet in regular seminars and work with a “professional development facilitator” on teaching. For the first three years, 10 to 12 Kellogg Fellows met each year to focus on community college students and how best to teach them. A major emphasis of the program was on general education. Lengthy discussions were held on GE philosophy and how most effectively to implement the innovative GE model.

The Practice

AFTER YEARS OF PLANNING, LMC opened the doors of its brand-new campus to some 1,800 students in September 1974. The test of the “it looks great on paper” approach to GE was underway. Carhart wrote at the time, “In my

After years of planning, LMC opened the doors of its brand-new campus to some 1,800 students in September 1974. The test of the “it looks great on paper” approach to GE was underway.

judgment, the program is both exciting and is conceptually and philosophically valid. We now have a total and comprehensive general education program underway. As is true with any new program, it will need some modification and additional evaluation as we gain more experience. Yet I am confident that students and staff members for many years to come will applaud the innovative general education model that was created in these opening years of Los Medanos College.”

Writing in 1976, Collins and Drexel stated: The planning and implementation “have more than demonstrated the model’s promise. There is increasing conviction that this core curriculum will

prepare students to educate themselves to face the grave societal problems facing them. This balanced array of general education courses will introduce students to the pleasures of knowledge and thought and contribute to the enrichment of their lives.” However, Collins, one of the key architects of the initial model, some years after he retired called it “an overly complex curricular plan which participating faculty members made a valiant effort to make work.”

For the college’s first three years, the GE faculty met to work out implementation issues, particularly the difficulty of tying the discipline courses to the corresponding generic course. Other issues emerged:

- Articulation of the generic courses was sometimes problematic. The transfer institutions did not know what to do with a one-unit mega-survey GE course.
- Since the generic/discipline combination required four class hours per week, scheduling patterns were difficult.
- Plural pursuits were supposed to focus on serious societal issues. However, since students could pick almost any topic of interest, they often focused on a project like *the meaning of the lyrics in American Pie*.
- Students did not like the large lecture hall approach to the generic courses.
- Students complained that the generic courses were sometimes a sort of soapbox for “women’s and ethnic concerns” from a liberal perspective that did not give adequate air time for various points of view.
- Finally, despite significant efforts, the relationship of the discipline courses to the generic course was always problematic. Although the model was touted as promoting integration, it lacked coherence from the student’s perspective.

During LMC’s third year, students circulated a petition asking the college to get rid of the generic courses. The effort garnered significant coverage in the college newspaper; some 600 students signed the petition. Although they were the architects of the original model, key college administrators Carhart, Case, and Collins agreed to form a task force to study and respond to the students’ concerns. The group was told to take the students’ issues

with the generic course seriously. If the recommendation of the task force was to eliminate the course, then it was charged with developing an alternative approach to address the key aspects of the generic courses, which had been based on the founding philosophy.

The task force included young, energetic faculty with a real commitment to general education. Instructors such as Kate Brooks (Boisvert), Ed Bolds, Jerry Davis, Christine Hagelin, Marge Lasky, Connie Missimer, Ed Rocks, and this writer led the reform effort. We were supported by academic managers Chet Case and Charles Collins. After a few meetings, the group concluded that the issues with the generic courses were significant enough that the courses should be eliminated. It took considerably longer to develop a viable alternative to them.

The Reform

THE TASK FORCE eventually recommended replacing the six generic courses with two sequential three-unit courses focusing on an ethical analysis of societal issues. The courses were designed to:

- focus on significant societal issues;
- take an interdisciplinary and ethical analysis approach;
- include an emphasis on pluralism, a.k.a. ethnic and women's concerns; and
- require students to complete a self-directed study (replacing plural pursuits), a research paper on a societal issue of the student's choosing.

The first course, Humanistic Studies 2LS: An Ethical Inquiry into Societal Issues, was developed by an interdisciplinary group of faculty to concentrate on four or five societal issues. Originally, the focus was on energy/environment, population growth, and equality and justice by gender and by race. It was assumed that the issues could change over the years, but what was crucial was the ethical inquiry approach, regardless of the specific issues being studied. Faculty and students would ask three key mega-questions on each issue:

- What is the nature of the problem?
- What are the alternatives to addressing the problem?
- What “should” be done (including an analysis of the ethics/values involved)?

Students were required to apply the ethical inquiry methodology in their papers. The course was team developed but taught by individual instructors from a variety of disciplines. The team met regularly for the year of planning and the first year of implementation to teach one another and to share instructional strategies.

The second course, designated a 3LS course, was similar to the first, but focused on one societal issue. This “capstone course” allowed students (and faculty) to go into much more depth on a single issue, while further developing the ethical inquiry skills that were introduced in HUMST 2LS. Sample topics in the early years were conflict in the Middle East; crime and violence in the U.S.; freedom and responsibility of the mass media; and origin and evolution of the universe.

Participants in the college governance structure overwhelmingly endorsed changes in the general education structure and recommended them to President Carhart, who also approved.

Once implemented, student evaluations of the courses were generally positive. The typical response was: “This is one of the hardest courses I’ve ever taken, and one of the best.” And the original faculty were very positive about the professional development opportunities that went along with teaching the courses. They also reported that they became better teachers in their own disciplines as a result of teaching the interdisciplinary ethical inquiry courses.

Dean Charles Collins, writing after he retired, described ethical inquiry: “There was no pussy footing around about it. The instructors hit the ethical implications of these societal issues head on. The instructors did not teach their own ethical conclusions but they did force each of their students to arrive at his/her own ethical conclusion. This was dauntingly tough, yet extremely rewarding teaching.” And he noted that the program was based on “pragmatic ethics, not religious ethics. Public colleges have no right to

impose any denominational body of ethics nor any philosophic school of ethics. . . . Societal issues are basically ethical issues. Therefore, it is a legitimate function, even an obligation, of a public college to help its students understand the ethical choices that face them.”

Collins reported that the outside evaluators of the change “couldn’t help but be enthusiastic about the success of the revised LMC general education model.”

Tier I Project

DURING THE DEVELOPMENT of the 2LS and 3LS structure—now designated as Tier II and Tier III courses—the president and deans also asked faculty to address the GE discipline courses. They noted that no criteria had ever been developed to determine “what is general education?” at the discipline level. The college applied for, and was awarded, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish the Tier I Project, under the leadership of Chet Case, the college’s professional development facilitator. The “charge” to a large group of committed GE faculty was to work on “criteria for what is (or is not) a Tier I course. Up to now, there has been no clear, comprehensive statement nor consensus on what constitutes a general education course for Tier I.” During the fall of 1981, the group developed eight criteria for general education at LMC:

1. interdisciplinary;
2. modes of inquiry of the discipline;
3. aesthetics of knowledge;
4. implications (ethics) of knowledge;
5. reading and writing in the learning process;
6. critical and effective thinking;
7. creativity; and
8. pluralism.

The task force also conducted extensive discussions about the pedagogy and philosophy of general education. In its report, it stated: “If there

is a distinctive general education curriculum, there is a distinctive general education pedagogy. This pedagogy contributes much to the unique flavor of general education. . . . It is an active pedagogy that strives to engage the learner in the applications of knowledge to the problems and issues of the real world, public and personal. It is a pedagogy that seeks to select from the vast realms of knowledge of the discipline those materials that contribute in an important way to an explication to the learner of the world and how it works. It is a pedagogy that is less concerned with initiating a neophyte into the details of the discipline than it is with enlarging the learner's comprehension and utilization of knowledge for general understandings. . . . It seeks to integrate knowledge, to impart skills, to invite the learner to participate in learning that which every person needs to know."

The paper stated that Tier I courses should have certain common attributes, in addition to the eight criteria. They should:

- show the interrelatedness of knowledge, life, events, and phenomena on this Spaceship Earth;
- help learners to expand and make more accurate their global perspectives;
- be infused with a humane perspective;
- awaken the learner to a consciousness of the future;
- broaden the learner's awareness of the commonalities and uniqueness among the people of the Earth;
- impart to the learner a sense of being a participant in the dialogue of common learning;
- give learners the opportunity to learn about values, their own and others, and to understand the origins, the shaping, and influences of behavior on values; and
- strike a proper balance between substantive content of the discipline and the general education elements.

Therefore, one significant outcome of the Tier I project, which involved all full-time faculty teaching GE at the time, was updating and recommitting to the founding philosophy of general education.

The remainder of the project focused on curricular innovation and updates. During spring 1982, faculty were required to rewrite their course outlines in order to show explicitly how they met each of the eight criteria. Essentially, faculty had to reapply for general education status for their courses. The position paper on Tier I noted that evidence to satisfy the criteria had to be in the course outline and include goals and objectives, course overview and rationale, and the course content and materials. It added that the “criteria will be satisfied to a degree reasonable and appropriate to the discipline.” Drafts of rewritten outlines were submitted to a peer review group of GE faculty. Typically, the outlines did not “pass” during the first review and had to be rewritten before they were accepted.

President Carhart accepted the work of the Tier I project, with commendation.

Reflecting on the value of the Tier I project, the report authors concluded: “If our courses have been well wrought, if we have taught them well, and if the learner has engaged us and our courses with willingness and profit, then perhaps the general education program will have achieved a high order of purpose by helping the learner continue a lifetime of more effective and active learning.”

For more than a decade after the Tier I implementation, general education at LMC was essentially “steady state.” However, two significant issues did emerge as the 1980s progressed:

First, the Tier I project involved full-time faculty and required a significant professional development component. The full-timers seemed to “get GE—both the words and the music.” However, with growth and financial limitations, the college hired more and more part-time instructors. While they were qualified in their disciplines, they often had no background in general education. There was evidence that some part-timers did not understand the GE philosophy or criteria. The college had no formal training/professional development for the GE part-timers, other than an occasional FLEX activity.

Second, many faculty at the college expressed interest in instituting an ethnic/multicultural requirement. By the early 1990s, a consensus emerged that LMC’s “infusion” approach was not adequate and that a course requirement should be implemented. However, faculty and administrative leaders

were concerned that the college already had an unusually high number of required units and that adding three more would be problematic. Therefore, the decision was made to eliminate the 3LS (second semester of ethical inquiry—Tier III) and replace it with one ethnic/multicultural course, chosen by the student from a variety of options.

Reform, Revisited

IN 1996, THE GOVERNING BOARD named Raul Rodriguez the fourth president of Los Medanos College. He was the first educator from outside the District to lead the college. Early in his tenure, Dr. Rodriguez indicated that the college needed to revisit and reform its 15-year-old general education model. Many faculty leaders and educational managers agreed.

A multi-constituency task force, co-chaired by a faculty member and dean, was formed to address GE issues. Its charge from the president was to:

- generally review the GE philosophy and model and propose revisions, as necessary;
- investigate whether the LMC model actually had an unusually high number of required units compared to other community colleges and, if so, devise a plan to reduce them;
- see whether GE requirements could be better aligned with those of key transfer institutions, in order to facilitate student transfer;
- move to increase the number of options for students to meet the requirements; and
- retain the academic integrity of the existing model “by ensuring an integrated, comprehensive general education which retains reasonable college-level standards.”

The group spent most of two academic years on the project. After extensive discussions, the members reached consensus on the ongoing value and relevance of the LMC general education philosophy. The focus then shifted to how to improve implementation, with a review of the existing eight GE criteria. It was determined that some of them were vague or dif-

difficult to teach. Therefore, the task force recommended that the GE criteria be reworked into five categories: (1) reading, writing, and speaking in the learning process; (2) interdisciplinary; (3) critical and creative thinking; (4) ethics of knowledge; and (5) social diversity and global perspective.

The task force then worked on the “nuts and bolts” of the GE requirements. There was tension between the desire for a broad-based liberal

The task force then worked on the “nuts and bolts” of the GE requirements. There was tension between the desire for a broad-based liberal education and the need to reduce units.

education and the need to reduce units. Members worked to redefine and combine the various categories (social science, behavioral science, humanities, etc.). One innovation that emerged was a “transfer track” AA that would be awarded to students who earned 60 degree-applicable units and met IGETC or CSU transfer requirements, plus local “Board requirements” (American institutions, health education, and physical education).

Although the group tried to keep the college community informed of its direction and draft proposals, some faculty complained that they did not know or understand what was being proposed. When the initial proposal went to the governance group (Policy Assembly), it was narrowly rejected. Opponents seemed to have two major objections: the model needed to be more closely tied to CSU’s GE model (one counselor proposed that LMC simply adopt the CSU breadth requirements), and enrollment and faculty load issues would present a problem. The debate had both philosophical and pragmatic aspects to it. The task force tried to address the objections and the revised model was approved by the assembly and accepted by the college president. The resulting model:

- added the transfer track associate degree;
- reduced the eight GE criteria to five;
- encouraged faculty to develop additional courses to meet requirements in each category, as long as they clearly met the five new criteria;

- meant that the typical student would have to complete three to six fewer required units; and
- established a General Education Committee, a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, to review revised and new GE course outlines and proposed changes in options to meet requirements.

The changes were implemented in the late 1990s and generally seem to have achieved the hoped-for outcomes of the task force—the philosophy was retained, units were reduced somewhat, students' options were increased, and requirements were better aligned with those of transfer institutions.

The Present

IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM, general education continues to be central to the mission of Los Medanos College. The General Education Committee, under the leadership of faculty members Ken Alexander, Cindy McGrath, and Nancy Ybarra, has become more active. In addition to its original charge, it has taken the lead in identifying and beginning to assess student learning outcomes (SLOs) in GE at the institutional level. The Accrediting Commission requires “a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.” In the spirit of this standard of good practice, the GE group “translated” the five criteria into outcomes, as follows. At the end of the LMC general education program, a student will:

- read critically and communicate effectively as a writer and speaker;
- understand the connections among disciplines and apply interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving;
- think critically and creatively;
- consider the ethical implications inherent in knowledge, decision-making, and action; and

- possess a worldview informed by diverse social, multicultural, and global perspectives.

The committee also developed expanded explanations and “assessment criteria” for each outcome. As faculty write new course outlines, or update existing ones, this information will be incorporated into the course outline of record. As part of that process, course-level SLOs are being developed, aligned with the institutional-level GE outcomes.

The GE Committee also has adopted an 11-year assessment plan for general education. Essentially it involves overlapping assessment cycles—year one: professional development around each SLO; year two: plan and experiment with pilot SLO assessments; and year three: assess the SLO, analyze the results, and create a learning improvement plan. Ongoing professional development for GE faculty is central to the success of the plan. The cycle for critical and creative thinking has been completed and faculty are now working on the reading, writing, and speaking criterion. Many of the professional development efforts have been well received by faculty. However, it continues to be a struggle for the GE Committee to get all full-time GE faculty to be involved in the assessment process and part-time instructor participation has been even more difficult to achieve. Getting faculty to update their course outlines in a timely manner with required SLOs continues to be an issue.

So, at age 35, Los Medanos College continues to wrestle with the question from the early 1970s: “What should a well educated person know?” The ongoing dialog required to answer the question has been a rich one. The reason that it is worth the effort is reflected in the statement on the values of general education from the Association of American Colleges and Universities:

“A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a rapidly changing world. It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our actions. Liberal education requires that we understand

the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis and expression; that we cultivate respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship and service to our communities.”

PART III

Coping with Change



Diablo Valley College's San Ramon Center moved to new, permanent facilities at 1690 Watermill Road in November 2006.

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C H A P T E R



Faculty at West Contra Costa Junior College, 1950;
the United Faculty logo

The History of the United Faculty

This first part of this account comes from the history of Diablo Valley College (DVC), written for the 40th anniversary of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) and published in 1990. The author was a young history instructor, Greg Tilles, who joined two more experienced faculty members, Don Mahan and Ruth Sutter, in writing a detailed account of the first four decades.

There was no overwhelming interest in collective bargaining in the District before the passage of the Rodda Act in 1975, which authorized it throughout public schools. Into this newly created vacuum sprang the established statewide teacher organizations, the California Teachers Association, and the California Federation of Teachers. Their aggressive tactics in trying to sign up districts for representation were worrisome to many

faculty leaders. After a lot of soul-searching, the faculty of our District took the unprecedented step of forming an independent bargaining organization, the United Faculty (UF). It was the first organization of its kind among California community colleges and would inspire other districts to follow suit with their own independent unions.

The UF sought to keep its initial agreement with the District minimal, partly because we were new at the process and partly because most faculty were suspicious of a formal contract. That all changed with the passage of Proposition 13 in June 1978. No public institution was fully prepared for the consequences, which began immediately. In the short term, we lost funding; in the long term, we lost control to Sacramento. As employees of the District, we lost the reliable assurances we had had since the beginning. And so we responded by starting the long process of drafting, negotiating, and gaining agreement on the first comprehensive contract. Throughout that protracted battle, the watch word for the UF was “Protect what we have and improve where we can.” The second beginning of the United Faculty had started.

Compared with the experience of faculty groups in other districts, our transition to collective bargaining went fairly well. But at the end of the process of winning that first comprehensive contract, many faculty felt a sense of loss. We had had to leave behind the old comfortable myths of our childhood.

The second part of this history was compiled by District Associate Vice Chancellor/Chief Human Resources Officer Eugene Huff and Contra Costa College English Professor Jeffrey Michels, who was elected United Faculty president in 2006. The article is based on input from recent UF presidents—Marge Lasky, Sue Shattuck, Brendan Brown, and Jeffrey Michels.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE UNITED FACULTY

Greg Tilles

IN SEPTEMBER 1975, GOVERNOR JERRY BROWN signed Senate Bill 160 (the Rodda Act), thereby establishing the legal framework for collective bargaining between California community college boards of trustees and their certificated and classified employees. The stated purpose of the law was:

to promote the improvement of employer-employee relations . . . by providing a uniform basis for recognizing the rights of employees to join organizations of their own choice, to be represented by such organizations in their professional and employment relationships with employers, [and] to select one employee organization as the exclusive representative of the employees in an appropriate unit . . .

This political action in Sacramento had been anticipated as much as two years earlier, and the Diablo Valley College community had already begun to explore various issues associated with collective bargaining and its potential impact on the college. Within a few days of the bill's signing, Bill Harlan and Rich Wilbanks announced in the *DVC Forum* (September 26, 1975) that "collective bargaining is now a reality with which the people of this district must deal this year." They also cautioned that "major new legislation normally gives rise to many questions," and they further asserted that "some answers will be created by our own initiative." Thus the curtain was rising on DVC's adaption to one of the most significant professional changes in the history of the institution.

The Rodda Act provided for a transition period before it became fully operative on July 1, 1976. As a consequence, the 1975–1976 school year at DVC witnessed substantial campus activity related to interpretation, debate, and implementation of various provisions of the new collective bargaining law. For the DVC faculty, two profound and interrelated issues had to be addressed at the outset. The first was the basic question of whether or not some organization should be designated as the "exclusive representative" of

the entire faculty with the authority to negotiate an employment contract for them with the District Governing Board. (SB 160 allowed for “no representation” if a majority of instructors supported such a position, in effect opting out of a collective bargaining arrangement.) And, if a majority of faculty favored exclusive representation, the second question would be the determination of which organization would represent all the teachers.

The first problem appears to have been resolved rather easily; in the months following the passage of SB 160, there is little evidence in the public debate to indicate major faculty resistance to the notion of exclusive representation. To be sure, some voices of opposition were raised. In a *DVC Forum* (March 26, 1976), Dick Worthen took the liberty of “playing a Gallup without a poll,” as he asserted, “I think the majority of the DVC Faculty, and probably the other colleges as well, believe . . . that we do not need collective bargaining in this district.” He went on to observe that “we think we have developed procedures collegially, however imperfect, that are superior to what collective bargaining can give us.” Math instructor Ben Bowen followed with a *Forum* article (April 9, 1976), entitled, “It’s (An) S(O)B 160,” in which he emphasized the fact that DVC instructors had the option *not* to designate *any* organization for the purpose of exclusive representation and he stated his belief that “the Faculty Senate can go on representing our interests as it has in the past.” However, while opposition was expressed, the major attention of the campus community focused not on whether the faculty should be represented in collective bargaining, but rather on what form that representation should take.

With collective bargaining now the law, the approach to faculty representation proposed two years earlier by Wendell Taylor and Rich Wilbanks—namely the formation of a new Districtwide organization free of outside ties—was moved to center stage. While plainly compatible with DVC’s long-standing traditions of independence and suspicion of outside influences, this approach became especially appealing to most DVC faculty in the aftermath of the passage of the Rodda Act. In the spring of 1976, a number of instructors expressed serious reservations about the behavior of statewide organizations in the scramble to “capture” the right to represent local District faculties as the full implementation of collective bargaining drew near. Two of these associations with local chapters at DVC—the California Federation of Teachers

(CFT) and the California Teachers Association (CTA)—were singled out, with the latter drawing the bulk of faculty criticism.

Ironically, some of the harshest words were written by DVC teachers who were members of the college's CTA affiliate, the DVC Faculty Association. Bob Flanagan, the faculty association treasurer and acting chairman of its executive board, expressed his alarm over "high-handed" tactics used by CTA organizers to form a Districtwide chapter with no regard for input from the DVC faculty or participation by the elected leadership of the existing DVC chapter. He asked himself whether he wanted "to continue to be affiliated with an organization which has such little regard for the wishes of the membership and even less regard for democratic processes" (*Forum*, March 26, 1976). Dick Worthen complained of "meddling and mind control" by the "new CTA," as the statewide organization brought outside collective bargaining specialists to DVC to "ready us for the new era" and tell DVC faculty "how we were expected to conduct ourselves" (*Forum*, March 26, 1976). And Rich Wilbanks observed that his union, the CTA, shared undesirable characteristics with the CFT when he asserted: "They are both geared to the more numerous and lucrative interests of the K-12 segment [of the California public education system]; they are both dominated by hired hands whose self-interest is tied not to the betterment of our situation but to control of the organization and to convincing us that we need them" (*Forum*, January 16, 1976).

Local and Independent Association

AS CRITICISM OF OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS MOUNTED, work proceeded on the formation of a local and independent association to represent the faculty of DVC and the other District campuses in collective bargaining. From the beginning, this District union effort would be dominated by DVC instructors. Virtually all the work involved in the founding of the organization occurred at DVC during the 1975-1976 school year, with Rich Wilbanks, John Shumway, Bob Flanagan, Clark Sturges, and Bill Harlan all playing major roles in the process. Most of them had previously been active leaders and members of the campus Faculty Senate.

Conscious of the difficulty of forging a sense of unity among the faculty of a multi-campus district whose colleges had evolved separately and had developed mutual suspicions, these pioneers, at the suggestion of John

As criticism of outside organizations mounted, work proceeded on the formation of a local and independent association to represent the faculty of DVC and the other District campuses in collective bargaining. From the beginning, this District union effort would be dominated by DVC instructors.

Shumway, settled on the symbolically important name of *United Faculty* of the Contra Costa Community College District for their new organization. In the spring of 1976, they drafted a constitution and conducted a series of open meetings at all the colleges in order to solicit District faculty reaction and input before completing the final document. The United Faculty constitution provided for an executive board that would come to be dominated by DVC faculty, since its seats were allocated on the basis of each college's proportional share of the Districtwide faculty. Furthermore, after a brief stint by Contra Costa College (CCC) business instructor Glen Davidson as president of the organization in the fall of 1976, all subsequent United Faculty presidents for the next two decades would be drawn from the ranks of DVC instructors. These included Bob Flanagan, later

identified as “the father of the United Faculty” (1977–1979), Bill Harlan (1979–1981), Les Birdsall (1981–1985), and Rich Willbanks (1985–1989). In the spring of 1989, DVC history instructor Marge Lasky became the first woman elected to the organization's top leadership position. Brendan Brown, a math instructor at Los Medanos College (LMC), would break the DVC hold on the UF presidency in 1995.

The first task of the United Faculty after its establishment was to gain official recognition as the “exclusive representative” of the District faculty. Under the terms of SB 160, the organization was required to demonstrate to the District Governing Board that a majority of instructors wished it to be their agent in collective bargaining. This was accomplished convinc-

ingly during the spring 1976 semester when a vast majority (79 percent) of the District's full-time faculty signed petitions indicating their support for such an arrangement. On May 24, 1976, the Governing Board accepted the organization's petitions as a valid indication of faculty sentiment and voted unanimously to recognize the United Faculty as the teachers' exclusive representative. At this time, the United Faculty was the first organization of its type—locally formed and independent—to be recognized by a California community college board of governors. Eventually a number of other community colleges would follow suit.

Division Chair Dispute

THE EARLY SUCCESS of the United Faculty in its formation and recognition was tempered by a crisis over the status of DVC division chairs under the new system of collective bargaining. SB 160 had stipulated, in a section of the legislation dealing with “unit determination,” that the bargaining unit for instructors had to include “at least all classroom teachers,” but would exclude those district employees designated as “management employees.” The new law had defined as management “any position having significant responsibilities for formulating district policies or administering district programs.” It further provided that the designation of management positions would be left to the judgment of district governing boards (subject to review by the state Education Employment Relations Board, established by SB 160). In the spring of 1976, District Chancellor Harry Buttimer chose to interpret these provisions of the law broadly. Initially, he supported an administrative reorganization plan that would have eliminated the positions of DVC's seven division heads and replaced them with four new assistant deans; however, following strong opposition to this scheme expressed by the DVC Faculty Senate, the emerging United Faculty, and individual instructors, Buttimer recommended, and the District Governing Board approved, a plan that retained divisions chairs but designated them as managers.

This action precipitated a major dispute between the United Faculty and the District administration that spanned the entire 1976–1977 academic year. At issue was the unique practice of DVC faculty electing division chair-

persons from among their teaching colleagues, a procedure dating back to 1968, with formal adoption of the division structure at DVC, and deeply rooted in the even older practice of faculty election of department heads. In April 1977, in a “special issue on unit determination” of the *DVC Forum*, United Faculty President Bob Flanagan wrote that “this unique kind of faculty participation in the governance of the college has evolved naturally from our beginnings and has contributed significantly to the extraordinary degree of faculty interest and involvement in almost all aspects of the college” (April 29, 1977). He further expressed a personal fear that:

if division chairpersons derive their authority from the administration rather than from their colleagues, I don't think I will feel the same commitment as I do now to my division chairperson and therefore to my division. I won't have as much input into the operation of the division and by extension the college. I will feel more like a worker and less like a professional . . . DVC will be just another college with lines of authority clearly and tightly drawn.

Reinforcing Flanagan's views, Rich Wilbanks bluntly asserted that Chancellor Buttimer's action had moved him from his earlier “staunch defense of collegiality” to the conclusion that “the administration is not thinking of education at all, but is thinking of the managerial line of authority and of their individual protection.” To this, Wilbanks added his belief that “the Chancellor has made us into workers . . . [who] had better be organized as industrial workers because his organizational chart now follows the industrial model” (April 29, 1977).

These harsh assessments of the administration plan reflected a deep sense of frustration felt by the United Faculty leaders, following months of fruitless efforts to resolve this volatile issue in a manner acceptable to the perceived faculty interests. After a strained April 15, 1977, meeting at DVC, which ended abruptly when United Faculty executive board representatives informed the chancellor that his scheme to make division chairpersons part of management was totally unacceptable, the two sides had reached an impasse. They effectively ceased communication and awaited the outcome of a United Faculty appeal of the issue filed with the Education Employ-

ment Relations Board. In June, the state board dismissed the grievance. Now, in the face of this unfavorable ruling and continued administration intransigence, the United Faculty leadership relented and agreed to accept the chancellor's position. (A majority of DVC representatives on the UF board opposed the settlement.) The final agreement stipulated that division chairpersons would indeed be members of management, but the District administration guaranteed faculty participation in their selection and a three-year limit on their terms. In addition, DVC department heads would continue to be elected by the faculty and would be included in the faculty unit for purposes of collective bargaining.

While the bitter fight over the status of division chairpersons deeply divided faculty and administration and strained DVC's collegial tradition, the ultimate implementation of the chancellor's plan did not produce the dire consequences feared by union leaders such as Bob Flanagan and Rich Wilbanks. Commenting on the matter four years later, former United Faculty President Bill Harlan observed that "generally, division heads have been sensitive to faculty concerns while performing necessary administrative work efficiently" (*DVC Forum*, May 15, 1981). And, in 1989, after more than a decade of service as a member of the United Faculty executive board, including a term as the organization's president, Rich Wilbanks conceded that his concerns in 1977 might have been somewhat overstated and that "significant elements of cooperation between administration and faculty have remained—particularly at the individual college level."

In 2001–2002, however, District management replaced division chairs with full-time division deans. Both the UF and the DVC Academic Senate opposed the move, and the senate filed a lawsuit challenging the administration's right to abolish elected chairs. The senate eventually lost in court, but to this day, division deans remain a controversial subject at DVC.

Developing a Labor Contract

RESOLUTION OF THE DIVISION CHAIRPERSON issue in 1977 cleared the way for the development of a labor contract between the District and faculty. In a process that would last over three years, the United Faculty, as the

teaching staff's "exclusive representative," negotiated with representatives of the District administration to forge a wide-ranging collective bargaining agreement.

Initially the union sought a "minimal" or "short" contract that would deal only with "essential" matters like wages, benefits, and grievance procedures. Such a "limited" agreement would be largely predicated on the expectation that the District would continue to operate under existing professional policies; the contract would avoid inclusion of many professional areas allowable under the "scope of bargaining" under SB 160 such as class size, evaluation, leaves, and transfers. This approach was especially attractive to DVC instructors and administrators who sought to reconcile somehow the new reality of collective bargaining with the institution's collegial tradition of communication, democratic process, and mutual good will between faculty and administration in the formulation of professional policies. Dick Worthen clearly reflected this viewpoint at the time when he asserted, "I have not quite given up on the intriguing idea that this school district might develop a new departure that would allow both collective bargaining for narrow and important ends—money—and a continuing collegial structure for our professional life" (memo to the DVC Senate Council, December 5, 1977).

Although the United Faculty successfully negotiated a "minimal" contract with the District in the 1977–1978 school year, the appeal of this type of agreement was shattered by the passage of Proposition 13 in June 1978. During the financially uncertain months that followed the election, District management undertook a series of unilateral actions detrimental to the professional status of the District faculty; these included raising class sizes, increasing teaching loads, canceling sabbatical leaves, revoking released time, and slashing instructional programs. These moves were followed by the summary termination of many part-time instructors and the threat of possible full-time faculty layoffs. Looking back on this difficult period for instructors throughout the District, Bill Harlan believed that "the collegial model was now found wanting." He also observed that "suddenly, we discovered how vulnerable we really were without specific, legal protections" (*DVC Forum*, June 5, 1981). Acting on these beliefs, Harlan successfully ran for president of the United Faculty in November 1978 on a platform that

identified the new necessity of seeking a “comprehensive” contract with the District to secure as many legal safeguards for the faculty in as many areas of employment as permitted within the scope of the collective bargaining law.

Under Harlan’s leadership, the United Faculty moved forward in the spring of 1979 with the formulation of a detailed faculty proposal for a comprehensive contract. Rich Wilbanks was the principal architect of the original document, which was the result of his extensive research into various contracts that might provide models for an agreement appropriate for the District. Using the “Wilbanks contract” as a starting point, the United Faculty prepared and distributed drafts of the document to every faculty member for consideration. Numerous public meetings were then held at each District campus to discuss and debate the proposed agreement, and written input was solicited from the faculty. Once the draft was revised into its final form, it was printed and distributed to instructors for yet another review. This unique process of public formulation of the contract proposal lasted over two months and cost the United Faculty several thousand dollars; however, the organization’s leadership considered this to be an essential prelude to formal negotiations, as they believed it established a sense of trust and clear communication between the District faculty and the union’s executive board.

Moving Forward

THIS DIFFICULT PRELIMINARY PROCESS and extensive negotiations that would follow were significantly facilitated by two important actions taken by the UF executive board during the 1978–1979 school year. One was the decision to make the organization’s part-time typist, Barbara Ryan, a full-time secretary. Ryan would serve the union in that capacity through the 1980s, and during the critical period of contract formulation and negotiations, she brought what Bill Harlan described as “a high degree of competence to the variety of difficult tasks she was called upon to do.” Moreover, as Harlan maintained, “as a full-time employee working in the UF president’s office [on the DVC campus] . . . she provided an identifiable UF

presence [and] a new organizational authenticity” [*DVC Forum*, June 5, 1981]. The second major move was to initiate the publication of *Table Talk*. Conceived of and named by board member Clark Sturges, who served as its first editor, this informational newsletter became the principal means of written communications between the organization’s executive board and its membership while the contract was drafted and bargained, and continued to serve that important function as the United Faculty confronted various challenges and crises during the next decade.¹

The United Faculty presented the completed comprehensive contract proposal to the District Governing Board in the late spring of 1979 and awaited the beginning of negotiations. The bargaining process was temporarily delayed when the District offered, and the union accepted, a 12-percent faculty salary increase in exchange for postponement of an agreement until the 1980–1981 academic year. Formal negotiations did not commence until August 1979, and they would continue for more than a full year. Initially DVC TV/speech instructor Gene Hambleton acted as chief union negotiator and met one-on-one with his District counterpart, Ron Glick. Eventually, the United Faculty negotiating team—which included Bill Harlan, future organization president Les Birdsall (still an instructor at Los Medanos College) and DVC health science instructor Marge Smith—was brought to the table to assist Hambleton in decision-making and to improve communication between the negotiators, the union executive board, and the general membership. Then Contra Costa College Dean of Instruction Bob Martincich (a former DVC English instructor) joined Glick on behalf

¹ Sturges recalls that following a UF executive board meeting at Contra Costa College in 1977 or 1978, he and Rich Wilbanks stopped for a drink in Berkeley and discussed creating a publication printed by the UF that would be written and distributed on all three campuses, whenever it was timely. Sturges suggested the name *Table Talk*, with the obvious reference to the bargaining table. More importantly, the subtitle was “Information from the Executive Board.” This would not be a journal of opinion, the articles would not be signed, and the information would be designed to provide “marching orders to the troops.” It was from the beginning conceived as something very different from the well-established *DVC Forum*. Over the years, most articles were drafted by the UF president with help from the other board members and the editor—writing by committee. Sturges observes, “It wasn’t great style, but readers paid attention to it. There were critics, of course, who decried that *Table Talk* was biased and just presented one side, that of the UF. They were right—that was the intent.” The first issue appeared in September 1978.

of the District and the stage was set for major progress in the contract negotiations.

In the spring of 1980, Harlan later remembered, “The faculty negotiators had the feeling that after more than three years the UF was being taken seriously.” The two sides painstakingly worked through the complexities of the contract, dealing with such key matters as teaching load, class size, and grievance policy. By September 1980, the last issue to be resolved was salary; following diligent efforts to work out various salary formulas by Bob Flanagan and Clare Luiselli, representing the union and District, respectively; this last obstacle was removed and both parties agreed on the contract in the early morning hours of September 5.

On September 23, the District faculty ratified the agreement overwhelmingly, and the District Governing Board soon followed with unanimous approval. Thus, the first comprehensive contract had been successfully developed, and it would provide the foundation for subsequent agreements between the District and its faculty throughout the 1980s and likely beyond. In the opinion of Bill Harlan, this agreement represented above all “the success of the bargaining process.” “Despite dire warnings,” he asserted, “collective bargaining did not turn us into benumbed automatons in the education family. It did not end the dialogue between faculty and administration. If anything, it enhanced communications. (It’s a funny thing about communicating; if we don’t have to listen, very often we won’t.)” (*DVC Forum*, May 15, 1981)

Not all members of the DVC community shared such a sanguine view of collective bargaining or the United Faculty’s role in the process. For example, the same front page of the May 15, 1981, *Forum* that contained Harlan’s positive remarks also featured a critical article, written by physics instructor Loy Wiese, which charged that the negotiations leading to the comprehensive contract had produced a “sell out” on the long-standing issue of teaching load. Specifically, Wiese chastised the United Faculty executive board for allowing the District to continue to require an 18-hour load of instructors who teach a combination of lecture and laboratory courses, and he concluded that the union had decided that “it is not politically attractive to fight for a remedy to an injustice suffered by only a few.”

A Perception of Communication

WELL BEFORE THE UNITED FACULTY had successfully bargained for the first comprehensive contract, other dissident voices had been raised. In the fall of 1977, family life instructor Beverly Reardon expressed alarm over her perception of ineffective communication on negotiations that threatened to alienate the union's executive board from the membership it was supposed to represent (*DVC Forum*, November 4, 1977). A semester later, English instructor Bill Miller publicly announced his withdrawal from the UF in the *DVC Forum* (March 3, 1978). He maintained that his action had been prompted by a recent membership vote authorizing the organization to engage in political activities in Contra Costa County, which the executive board had explained would "enhance our ability to negotiate and enforce our contracts," and would include involvement in District Governing Board elections. Miller also indicated his uneasiness over the United Faculty's increasing use of lawyers as advisors in the negotiation process, and he concluded that he no longer could be a part of an organization operating under a collective bargaining law that had "created the unworkable labor/management dichotomy . . . a *bad* law which had resulted in an internal split within our profession."

Perhaps the bitterest controversy at DVC over the operation of the United Faculty in the system of collective bargaining arose in 1980 when the union sought authorization to impose a "service" on full-time faculty who did not belong to the organization. As part of the first comprehensive contract nearing fruition in the spring of 1980, the United Faculty and the District had agreed upon an "agency shop" provision that would require—as a condition of employment—that all DVC and other District faculty would either join the union or pay it a service fee equal to monthly dues paid by the members. Agency shop would take effect only if the faculty approved in an election conducted by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

Initially, the United Faculty wanted to bring the question to a vote during the spring 1980 semester, and PERB agreed to hold a District election on June 2. The union's executive board recommended a yes vote on the service fee for two major reasons. The first was the matter of equity, "that

all faculty should pay their fair share of the costs of representation.” The second argument was that the United Faculty needed the extra revenue as it faced an anticipated \$7,000 deficit because of greatly increased expenses in areas like attorney fees, printing, political action, and other costs related to effective representation of faculty interests.

While the United Faculty claimed that “many members” had “urged” the imposition of the service fee, its inclusion in the contract and the attempt to gain faculty approval drew harsh public reaction from several DVC instructors. History teacher Peggy Radford characterized the agency shop election as an act of “broken faith, . . . a betrayal” of assurances made by the United Faculty leaders in 1976 “that there would never be any pressure on anyone to support the UF with more than good faith and tacit agreement that they should be the bargaining agent” (*DVC Forum*, May 23, 1980). Business instructor Suzanne Houston described it as “strong-arm politics” and declared that “there is nothing so repugnant to me as to force a person to support an organization to which he is opposed upon threat of losing his job!” She announced that she would no longer voluntarily pay dues to the United Faculty and suggested that the DVC faculty “give up on this organization, initiate proceedings to decertify it as our exclusive bargaining representative, and try to get back to a more natural, collegial approach to campus governance” with *no representation* as allowed under the collective bargaining law (*DVC Forum*, May 23, 1980).

The Committee for NO

AS THE JUNE 2 AGENCY SHOP election approached, Joe King and Dick Worthen formed a “Committee for NO on Agency Shop” and were joined by Bill Tarr, physical science instructor Hal Smith, and economics instructor Joe Patrick (then president of the AFT local chapter at DVC) in a concerted effort to oppose the leadership of the United Faculty on the service fee. The thrust of their opposition strategy was to target some 700 District part-time instructors eligible to participate in the election with personal contacts and flyers, urging them to vote against the proposal. They tried to convince these part-timers, the vast majority of whom were not members of

the United Faculty, that a yes vote would almost guarantee that they would face compulsory dues in the future (in spite of the union claims that it had no intention of exercising its authority to impose fees on part-time instructors); they also attempted to show that the United Faculty cared little about the interests of these teachers, as demonstrated by the freeze on part-time hourly wages contained in the contract. This opposition group appealed to full-time instructors as well by raising the specter of termination for refusing to join the union or pay dues, and they argued that the need for a service fee could be avoided simply by reducing the “fat” in the United Faculty budget, especially expenses for political action.

Moreover, King, Worthen, Tarr, and Patrick appealed to PERB to postpone the election, claiming they were given insufficient time to approach all eligible voters, and that the scheduled time for voting on June 2 (only two hours in the middle of the day) would effectively preclude most part-time and some full-time instructors from participating. They also retained an attorney and threatened to seek an injunction if PERB attempted to conduct the election as planned. By May 27, PERB had informed United Faculty attorneys that the election would be open to challenge; therefore, despite its “impression that the great majority of the regular faculty favors the service fee,” the union’s executive board requested cancellation of the election and indicated its intention to reschedule it in the fall.

The service fee question quickly resurfaced in the fall 1980 semester. The same day (September 23) that the District faculty voted to ratify the comprehensive contract, it also supported by a 78-percent majority a United Faculty executive board proposal to hold another agency shop election. (At DVC, 73 percent of the faculty favored it.) This time, a three-day election was scheduled by PERB for October 27–29, with considerably expanded voting periods in the day *and* evening hours. The major issues previously raised by both sides in the aborted spring election dominated the debate once again, as the Committee for NO on Agency Shop campaigned heavily among part-time instructors while the United Faculty attempted to dismiss the threat of future compulsory fees for part-timers as a “phony” issue—since the contract stipulated that it could only be imposed with the permission of these teachers. After close to a month of debate, charges and counter-charges, and occasional personal attacks, the service fee was ulti-

mately defeated by a narrow margin, 284 yea to 297 no. The chief individual adversaries in the battle, Bill Harlan and Joe King, agreed that the outcome had been determined by an overwhelming opposition vote cast by some 150 part-time instructors who had participated in the election.

It would be almost four years before the United Faculty executive board asked the District faculty to reconsider the imposition of a service fee. This renewed request was based mainly on the need to offset a projected union budget deficit as a result of increased operating costs and lost membership due to retirements. In April 1984, a survey of the membership indicated strong support for another agency shop election, and a vote was scheduled to take place on May 30.

In many ways, the 1984 service fee election would prove to be significantly different from its 1980 predecessor. Of crucial importance was the fact that part-time instructors would not be allowed to participate in the voting; the new contract, which began in the 1983–1984 school year, provided for a vote *only* by full-time faculty to decide only if full-timers should contribute to the United Faculty. The voting would be supervised by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley rather than PERB, which had drawn considerable criticism for poor planning and advertising the aborted June 1980 election. In addition, the public debate preceding this election was decidedly less emotional and considerably more limited than that which came before the 1980 vote. Most of it was contained in a compilation of “pro/con” arguments, which were solicited from all District faculty by the United Faculty executive board, published at union expense, and edited by *Forum* editor Dick Dudley. Of 22 articles submitted (18 of which were written by DVC faculty), 14 argued in favor of the service fee and eight were against. The main issues raised were similar to those brought forth in 1980: equity and financial necessity dictated the imposition of the fee while freedom to choose and skepticism over financial need justified opposition to it. Noticeably absent from the debate was input from the leaders of the 1980 opposition campaign, as Joe King, Joe Patrick and Bill Tarr chose not to respond to the call for articles, and Dick Worthen had since retired from full-time teaching.

The outcome of the 1984 service fee election was also quite different from the 1980 result. This time, the District faculty approved the agency shop measure by a lopsided vote of 206 to 77.

The decisive resolution of the explosive service fee issue not only insured the financial stability of the United Faculty, but it also appeared to legitimize the union's role as the faculty's representative in collective bargaining. As organization president Les Birdsall had argued at the time of the 1984 election:

We cannot return to the days of old. We cannot pretend that collective bargaining does not exist. Collective bargaining is a fact. It is our (faculty's as well as administration's) responsibility to make it work. It is by nature adversarial, but it does not need to be confrontational. Those of us involved have worked hard to eliminate confrontation. Having a strong, respected, independent local organization is the only way to maintain the collegiality for which the UF was founded.

UNITED FACULTY—THE LAST 20 YEARS

Eugene Huff and Jeffrey Michels

DVC HISTORY PROFESSOR MARGE LASKY was elected president of the United Faculty in 1988, the year that Governor George Deukmejian signed into law Assembly Bill 1725, a landmark piece of legislation that changed community college funding and governance. Lasky called the bill “a nightmare in terms of the process of establishing district policies!” From February through May of 1990, the UF leadership attended daily (and often all-day) meetings dealing with aspects of AB 1725. Lasky recalls:

The [Faculty] Senate and UF decided that even though AB 1725 differentiated the areas of control exercised by the faculty organizations, we wanted to include reps of both the Senate and Union from each college on all committees that devised policy (e.g., evaluation, hiring, FSAs, etc). What that required were college committees that then sent reps

to inter-college committees that then sent reports to a super-committee of Senate and Union leadership. That super-committee then met with administrative reps—all with the goal of reaching consensus!

And then, the whole process went up in smoke!! Although the faculty and the administrators' committees seemed to agree on almost all issues, Chancellor Jack Carhart threw in a monkey wrench, rejecting many of the critical issues that we had agreed upon. What then ensued was a year in which we attempted to devise policies, but really made little headway.

Chancellor Carhart retired soon after the initial negotiations over implementing AB 1725, but it took years before the District would catch up with the state's mandates, and many of the core agreements took extraordinary effort on the part of both faculty and management. "I remember meeting with Helen Benjamin (who was vice-chancellor of educational programs at the time) until 4 A.M. one morning," Lasky recalls, "hammering out evaluation policies (most of which I guess have lasted these last 17 years!)."

In 1991, under the leadership of a new chancellor, Bob Jensen, the District added college administrators to its bargaining team, and the UF pressed for and achieved its longstanding goal of adding binding arbitration to the grievance process in the contract. The 1992 agreement also added load banking as a new option for faculty.

In 1993, the UF took its first grievance to binding arbitration, objecting to what the union saw as unfair increases to class sizes at Contra Costa College (CCC). In order to increase enrollment, CCC President Candy Rose had raised class maximums prior to the start of classes without following contractual procedures. Since the college and District administration denied the validity of the UF's grievance, the UF exercised its new right to seek binding arbitration. Two out of the three arbitrators decided in favor of the union and agreed that faculty whose class size had been arbitrarily altered had a right to compensation.

Throughout the 1990s, the UF worked closely with other Bay Area bargaining agents through the Bay Faculty Association, and the dozen other independent bargaining agents in the state through the California Community College Independents, with the goal of contract improvement for all.

The 1990s also saw continual efforts to work collaboratively with District management, along with continued movement to improve the contract and salaries.

Under Brendan Brown's leadership, the union grew its political action fund, which enabled the UF to endorse and campaign for Governing Board candidates. Election results were mixed with UF-endorsed candidates winning about 50 percent of the time. Brown, an LMC math professor elected to the presidency of the UF in 1995, recalls that "one longtime UF goal was achieved in 2000 when the District became the highest paid District in the Bay Area, according to an independent study. Faculty and the Board had always agreed that they wanted high salaries to make the CCCCD an attractive district in which to work."

Unfortunately, Brown notes, high salaries were short lived. Just six years later, the District had fallen to nearly last in Bay Area salaries. And the start of the 21st century ushered in one of the more contentious periods in relations between the United Faculty and District management, which ultimately led to several events that were unprecedented in the 30-year history of the union.

In the fall of 2003, with DVC English Professor Sue Shattuck, then president of the United Faculty, the UF executive board and negotiating team prepared to negotiate the entire contract under what the union leadership considered to be increasingly hostile conditions. As Shattuck explains, "They saw a continuous drive toward centralization of power at the District Office under the leadership of Chancellor Charles Spence and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Greg Marvel, with the imposition of more management in everyday college decisions through administrative reorganization and through District management's efforts to insert more administrators into the hiring and evaluations processes."

Shattuck recalls:

. . . even with this atmosphere as a backdrop, when negotiations on a new contract opened in spring 2004, the UF was astounded at the extent of the take-backs the District was demanding. Presenting documents to support their claims of a severe financial shortfall, for the first time

in the history of the District, its negotiators proposed a salary cut for all faculty. To further support their claims of financial trouble, the District announced a freeze on the hiring of any new faculty, and in another unprecedented move, in March 2004, issued dismissal notices (pink slips) to all 400-plus certificated personnel in the district. Recognizing that he could not defend this latter action, Chancellor Spence quickly rescinded every pink slip, but his decision could not erase the growing sense of mistrust and apprehension among faculty in the district. In addition to its demand for a salary cut, the District's contract proposal included take-backs in working conditions, medical and retiree benefits and faculty roles in the work of the colleges.

Negotiations continued throughout the spring 2004 semester with little progress. Faculty rallied to support their negotiators by organizing members to speak at District Board meetings, to demonstrate at the locations where negotiations were being held, and to conduct an inter-college march on the District Office in Martinez. Efforts by the UF to present research that called into question some of the District's claims about its financial position were criticized and largely dismissed by the District Governing Board.

By the summer of 2004, negotiations were at an impasse. The District had presented its "last, best, final offer," and the teams went to mediation, but even with the assistance of mediators, no substantive progress was made. In the midst of these negotiations, both the vice chancellor of human resources, Greg Marvel, and the vice chancellor of business services, John Hendrickson, left the District. Then in August, the Governing Board removed Charles Spence from his position as chancellor. "Rather than improving the bargaining situation, however," Shattuck reports, "these decisions meant that the UF now found itself in the position of having to negotiate with a series of interim appointments, individuals not willing to make significant decisions."

Thus, in the fall of 2004, mediation was determined to have failed, and both sides prepared to go to fact-finding, an exceedingly time-consuming and costly procedure and another step that had never been taken before in the history of collective bargaining in the District. In anticipation of a

District imposition of its last, best, final offer, the UF held several faculty meetings to discuss the possibility of a Districtwide strike, but decided not to move forward with that action. In April 2005, the UF finally agreed to a contract with the District that included a salary decrease for faculty for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

When Helen Benjamin became chancellor in August 2005, the District proposed, and the UF agreed, to investigate the possibility of using interest-based bargaining as a mode for negotiations, rather than the traditional, more adversarial approach that had been used in the past. The District sponsored several meetings to train administrators and faculty in the use of interest-based bargaining and, in 2006, both sides agreed to use this approach when negotiations were opened. Using this new method, the parties agreed to reinstate the previous salary schedule.

To address part-time faculty's rights to receive salaries more commensurate with the salaries received by their full-time counterparts, in 2001, the UF negotiated a definition of pay parity for part-time faculty.

Following the contentious negotiations of 2004–05 and the salary cut, some UF members wanted to consider the possibility of ending the union's independent status and affiliating with a larger union, an issue many members thought had been settled early in the union's history. The executive board agreed to conduct an orderly investigation of the possibility of affiliation. Over a year's period of time, the UF held meetings across the District at which representatives from several other unions—including the California Federation of Teachers, the California Teachers Association, and the American Association of University Professors—were invited to present reasons why the faculty should affiliate with them. Representatives of the California Community College Independents, the association of independent community colleges in California, were also invited to explain the advantages of remaining an independent union. The UF provided charts to help members compare the choices. In a secret ballot vote, the UF membership chose, by a narrow margin, to continue to remain independent.

During this time, the ranks of the part-time faculty grew substantially to the point where approximately 50 percent of course sections in the District were being taught by part-timers. With their increasing numbers came a greater awareness of their professional needs and their rights to participate more fully as members of the union. To address part-time faculty's rights to receive salaries more commensurate with the salaries received by their full-time counterparts, in 2001, the UF negotiated a definition of pay parity for part-time faculty. While not providing complete equity at that time, the agreement established a goal to move toward true parity in the future. To address part-time faculty representation in the UF in 2002, the union voted to increase part-time faculty voting rights so that each part-time member would have one full vote rather than the one-half vote each member had up to that time. And in 2004–2005, the UF reached agreement with the District to implement part-time “rehire rights,” which provided these faculty with limited job security and some continuity in their working conditions, having followed a rigorous evaluation and approval procedure.

In 2006, one of the authors of this essay, CCC English Professor Jeffrey Michels, was elected president of the UF by the narrowest margin in UF history, defeating DVC English Professor James O’Keefe by two votes to become only the third UF president in the union’s history not from DVC.

As a strong supporter of interest-based bargaining, Michels’s observation is that the UF has had a great many more successes than failures at the District. From recognizing domestic partnerships to load banking and sick leave donation to protecting and expanding medical and dental benefits, the union and the District have more often than not been statewide leaders in improving working conditions. “And the more collaborative our approach has been, the more effective we’ve been.”

By maintaining independence and using faculty members as negotiators, the UF has sustained one of the lowest dues structures in the state, with only moderate increases approved from time to time by the membership. In recent years, the UF’s role has continued to expand beyond collective bargaining to include problem-solving and dialog at just about every level of the organization as well as enrollment management and hiring policies. “In the past few years, we have used the interest-based approach as a model

for all our union/management interactions,” Michels explains, “and this has really led us beyond the old myth that collective bargaining is a necessary evil or somehow inescapably adversarial. In a way, our UF has returned to its roots, to an expanded partnership throughout the District that crosses constituency lines. It’s a work-in-progress, and it requires ongoing commitment from all sides, but it’s what works best for our students and our faculty.”

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C H A P T E R



Members of the first Governing Board were Bert Coffey (at left), Fred Abbott, President George Gordon, Elton Brombacher, and O.J. Wohlgenuth.

Dynamics of the College District Governing Board

Gene Ross

At the top of the organizational pyramid of a complex community college district is its governing board, a body that often seems opaque to most outsiders. Gene Ross has a decades-long association with the Contra Costa Community College District (District), and served on the Board from 1977 to 1998. (He has owned a commercial and residential real estate company in Martinez for many years.) Here, Ross lifts the veil to share with us how the Board approaches its responsibilities and the significant ways it has changed over the years. What he reveals is an informal coalition of diverse groups who were instrumental in helping the colleges achieve success and how their processes evolved over the decades.

THE CONTRA COSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT was born after the Second World War, when providing a college education for returning veterans was a national commitment through the GI Bill. Many of California's two-year colleges had their beginnings in that outburst of idealism, assisted by committed local civic leaders.

The drive to start our community college district was pushed by a group of men from the western and central portions of Contra Costa County. Unlike other start-up colleges at that time, most of these leaders knew each other well and respected each other. They were determined to establish a countywide college district, the first of its kind in the state. Because they set up a "multi-college" district, with the first three campuses to be located in what were then the three core centers of population, the voters could feel confident that they would have a college nearby that would serve them. The founders of the District were a very goal-oriented and focused group, who, after a few stumbles, were able to get Contra Costa County residents to approve a college district in December 1948.

Key Players in District's Formation

THOSE WHO PLAYED a key role in the formation of the District were Bryan Wilson, who was the county superintendent of schools; and initial Board members George Gordon, Elton Brombacher, Fred Abbott, and Bert Coffey. Bert was a Democratic consultant from the West County, who helped win the support of the well-respected State Senator George Miller (the father of our current Congressman, who chairs the House Education and Labor Committee). Another political leader whose support was essential was William Sharkey, Sr. (a former Republican state senator and publisher/owner of the *Martinez News Gazette*.) It was a politically bipartisan group. Wilson's role was especially important since he appointed the original Board. His relationship with George Gordon, a former teacher, must have been important.

Because the founders were personally so close, they created, with Bryan Wilson's help, a five-person Governing Board in January 1949. Almost all other large district boards in the state have seven members; only seven

multi-college districts have a five-person board. Given the current enrollment size, the county demographics and the governance complexity—three colleges and five campuses—some might say this was an “undersized” board. However, its smaller size helped lead to an efficiency and cohesiveness in Board action that was an important factor in providing for the colleges in a period of sustained growth, and led to the District becoming one of the most respected and successful in the state.

It is a political truism that the larger the committee, the more difficult it is to reach a consensus. Since the population of the county in the late 1940s was about 250,000, a seven-member board was probably unnecessary and would have led, for a growth-oriented institution, to more conflicts over the allocation of resources on a geographical basis. The original idea was to match the District “wards” to the county supervisorial districts to create parallel areas of community interest. Even though the county’s population has now soared to over 1 million, the suggestion to increase the Governing Board to seven seems unwarranted. The current system has served the citizens well for the last 60 years.

If you could talk to those Governing Board members from 60 years ago, or read the minutes of their meetings, you would notice two things: first, they liked and respected each other; second, as a group, their sole purpose was the growth and success of the colleges. Outside political and special interest groups were largely kept from influencing Board actions, except when it was in the best interest of the colleges. Those Board members with special political connections used them to protect the colleges and help achieve the goals of the District. In the early days, the Board was more or less unified in its decisions. Board members like George Gordon and Bill Moses were active in different parties but united in protecting the District from outside partisan influence.

District Growth

CERTAINLY, IF YOU WERE TO CHARACTERIZE the collective function of the Board from 1948 through the mid-1970s, you would describe it as a “building” function, dedicated to the institutional growth of the District. The need

for management focus was left largely in the hands of the superintendent/chancellor whose recommendations were generally accepted without question by the Board. The Drummond McCunn firing was a notable exception, and that event is discussed elsewhere in this publication. It did leave its mark on the District, especially in the relationship of the DVC faculty and the District Office, for many decades to come.

With a more-or-less manageable and focused Board, the District grew rapidly. New Board members were, for the most part, recruited by the administration or other Board members as needed. Through 1972, the first 24 years of the District's existence, there were 12 members added to the Board. Of those 12, three were originally elected and nine were appointed.

... The process of appointing members in the early days ensured that those who joined the Board shared the philosophy of the founders and, because so few were ever contested in election, remained committed to those goals throughout their tenure.

Since that time, 10 new Board members have been elected and only two appointed, just the reverse of the first 24 years. Of course, people connected with the District may well have recruited and supported candidates for the Board since 1972. One cannot say which approach was better for the District, but as the colleges grew and governing became more complex and open to public scrutiny, it was inevitable that the voters would play an increasingly important role in the selection of Board members. Nevertheless, the process of appointing members in the early days ensured that those who joined the Board shared the philosophy of the founders and, because so few were ever contested in elec-

tion, remained committed to those goals throughout their tenure. In retrospect, that was a good thing, since bitterly fought political campaigns could have interfered with the District's plans for growth.

In the beginning, the Contra Costa Community College District was fortunate to have a Board that worked closely together, simpler state codes with which to work, control of its own financial destiny, and two very successful chancellors during its first three decades—Karl Drexel and Harry

Buttimer. With very few exceptions, the Board could concentrate on District goals and institutional growth. Board meetings were relatively short and staff recommendations were generally accepted without much Board discussion.

In the very beginning, the Board adopted a “pay-as-you-go” philosophy as it dealt with its authority and responsibilities in setting an annual tax rate. Since approximately 75 percent of the District’s funds came from local property taxes, Board members had to balance District needs with what they thought the voters would approve when it came time to run for reelection. Although this “pay-as-you-go” system was officially dropped as the guiding principle of the District in 1958, setting the tax rate was a potential source of irritation with the faculty and staff whose income was tied directly to District revenues. The Board felt subject to criticism if taxes were increased without acceptable reasons. Therefore, members had to balance the needs for revenue and salary increases with the resistance of the anti-tax voters and other pressure groups.

The Contra Costa Taxpayers Association had opposed the formation of the District in those early efforts and was traditionally against any tax increase. Any public agency that added to the tax burden was subjected to criticism by and opposition from the association and its members. In the days before the passage of Proposition 13, the voters paid close attention to who was raising taxes, and some politicians used the issue of tax increases as a political football. Some Board members, rightly or wrongly, felt it was necessary to publicly adopt a policy of reducing tax rates when assessed valuation increased, presumably to satisfy older voters who were most concerned about the rapid rise in property values. Meanwhile, since lowering the tax rate was the stated policy of some Board members, employee groups, whose wages depended on how much the District took in, were understandably upset.

Impact of Proposition 13

THIS ALL CHANGED IN 1978 with the passage of Proposition 13 and the loss of the Board’s taxing authority. Now the state provided 75 percent of the

District revenue and property taxes accounted for only 25 percent, eliminating any issues over the tax rate.

The District was not completely prepared for the passage of the Jarvis-Gann Initiative. Chancellor Harry Buttimer, a thoughtful and capable administrator, believed that to prepare a budget based on state projections in the event of Prop 13's passage would not serve the best interests of the District. It would shatter employee morale and send a message to the voters that taxes could be slashed without any consequences. So when the measure was approved, the District had to change plans and directions very quickly and the Board had to act decisively.

After the passage of Prop 13, the next Board meeting attracted such a large crowd that it had to be moved to the county supervisors' chamber. Many college employees and students, alarmed by the cuts in programs and services, came to protest. Looking back, some of the dismissals and program terminations were done in a hasty and overly subjective fashion. However, the Board felt a real sense of urgency.

The Board and the chancellor, having established a conservative but responsible approach to budgeting, took the position that the District needed to cut programs and personnel rather than use up reserves in a very uncertain situation, hoping somehow the state would find the funds to help out. Not all community college districts responded this way.

Then, in the aftermath of the Prop 13 bombshell, the District found itself in a frustrating "catch-22." The state suddenly "discovered" unexpected reserves of millions of dollars and was in a position to provide increased funding for the colleges. However, the increases were based on districts' *post*-Prop 13 budgets rather than their budgets before the measure's passage. As a result, the districts that had irresponsibly wiped out their reserves got much more money than those districts, like Contra Costa, that had acted responsibly. It would take our District years to recover from this inequity.

Another major change in Board dynamics followed the passage of the Rodda Act in 1976, which brought collective bargaining to the colleges. Its effects took some time to make themselves felt. Some Board members were not comfortable with the idea of formal collective bargaining and unions in the public sector, especially in school business; others had little trouble

with the new situation. While Chancellor Buttimer was able to negotiate contracts that were basically satisfactory to all concerned, the process gradually began to affect how Governing Board members thought and felt. The transition from a focus on institutional growth to one on management concerns had begun. Certainly the Board continued to support growth and development of the colleges, but now management problems would involve more of their time. However, the industrial model of collective bargaining and its processes created tensions among the Board members and may have impeded settlement of issues in a positive way.

Changing Board Dynamics

IN THE 1970S AND 1980S, new Board members were elected who felt compelled to involve themselves in management issues, for better or worse. Of necessity, that trend would continue. A student member was added to the Board. Even though this member had no vote, his or her presence would lead to more discussions about and participation in the issues at the campuses. This change also signaled a more direct oversight role by the Board in student services and welfare. Some of the student trustees had an excellent grasp of issues facing the District and their inclusion was a positive development for Board dynamics.

In order to mitigate the scars created by conflict over collective bargaining battles, Board members and employee groups explored other negotiating models. In the late 1980s, two Board members and faculty representatives attended a conference on “win-win” bargaining. Although the Board’s participation in management issues was growing, it was not yet time for the bargaining model to change. However, the seeds had been planted.

Following the shift away from local funding control after the passage of Prop 13, individual Board members, having been elected from specific wards, were particularly concerned with the welfare of the campus they felt they represented, rather than with the health of the District as a whole. At a political level, it made sense to represent the interests of the voters who would be reelecting the Board member and who identified with a particular campus. In the earlier days, especially when most members were

appointed, there was a much more conscious commitment to the growth of the District as a whole.

As District resources were strained and differences among the colleges were exacerbated, why shouldn't a Board member feel that he or she must speak out, when asked to do so by a college leader or community member? This trend forced the Board to attend to management issues at the local college level to a greater extent than before.

Contra Costa College (CCC) and Los Medanos College (LMC) have been well represented by Board members in the past, with funding and adminis-

In 1988, AB 1725 formalized the process of shared governance in California community colleges. It was a very complex and comprehensive mandate that would require even more Board attention to management issues in the years to come.

tration being issues both inside and outside the Board meetings. This writer recalls a vigorous campaign by one Board member from Antioch to help ensure that courses from Los Medanos were recognized by the other colleges in the District. On occasion, I have felt the need to defend Diablo Valley College (DVC) over various issues.

In the past, there have been discussions about going to an "at-large" elected Board so that all members would be elected by the voters throughout the District. Many colleges throughout the state have this model, but there are some drawbacks. The entire Board could be controlled by the voters from the most populous area of the county, to the detriment of the rest of the voters. This concept might be more appropriate for a single college district.

In 1988, AB 1725 formalized the process of shared governance in California community colleges. It was a very complex and comprehensive mandate that would require even more Board attention to management issues in the years to come. By the early 1990s, the Governing Board dealt with a variety of issues that Board members in the 1950s would never have imagined. For example, the Board was much more involved with the selection of the chancellor. It participated in site visits to candidates' venues, along with

faculty and classified representatives, something unheard of in the early days of the District.

The growing need for financial efficiency meant that some District functions that had previously been done on the college campuses were now centralized. As a result, college “autonomy” became a bigger issue. The need for securing funds through bond elections automatically created more issues for Board members to deal with and ultimately would force the Board to participate even more fully in ongoing management decisions. The opening of the DVC campus in San Ramon and LMC’s Brentwood Center would add to the management oversight challenges.

In the 1980s, a procedure was established for the Board president to meet with the chancellor to review the Board agenda prior to the meeting, something that was never done back in the earlier years. The aim was to ensure that agenda items were discussed in an efficient and inclusive manner by allowing the Board president a chance to understand the background of each item and to make sure all parties were heard from. The procedure also gave the president a chance to ask questions of the staff to make sure that the best information would be available at the meeting.

In the late 1990s, the Board established its first standing committee, the Finance Committee. Its function was to help the Board members get more involved in the development of the District budget. A second committee was created to address issues arising from District growth and passage of the bond measures.

In the last several decades, the distinctions between institutional builders and institutional managers has blurred. At times the Board members must be both. The Board now has a mission statement and a self-evaluation procedure, something that the founding members of the District would find strange, indeed. But while the job is becoming more complex and demanding, the average tenure of members is becoming shorter and shorter. This lack of continuity is increasingly a problem. Even the most diligent newcomer to the Board cannot possibly understand the complexities and nuances of the position right away. Subtle differences among the colleges and different areas of the county, the history of long-standing issues, the positions of constituent groups, and many other matters can only be

understood with actual experience. It seems likely that it would take a new Board member at least one full term to get up to speed.

The advent of interest-based bargaining in the last few years has seemed to be a watershed event in District governance. The governance issues the Board faces are just as complex as ever, but the new bargaining process has eliminated many of the non-productive conflicts that impacted Board discussions in the past. Most decisions now are reached by consensus on the Board, and the members can now spend more of their time on institutional planning. In earlier years, relations between the Board and constituent groups were often marked by a lack of civility and mutual respect. Nowadays, this tension seems considerably less noticeable, and everyone can spend more time wrestling with institutional issues, of which there are plenty to go around.

Personal Experience

AS BOTH A DISTRICT CONSULTANT since 1966 and later as a Board member, I knew three of the founding Board members, giving me an extensive connection with the institutional history. In more than four decades of involvement, I never knew or heard of any Board members who acted other than with sincerity and integrity while serving their terms. The times, needs, and practices of the District changed, and there have always been differences of opinion, but every Board member I knew thought that he or she was acting in the best interest of the institution.

I believe that the current relationships among the Board, chancellor and constituent groups are appropriate for a situation where the Governing Board needs to focus on both growth and management issues that will challenge our District in the coming years. The need to balance growth management, student services, short-term state budgets, a complex state education code, shared governance, collective bargaining, and electoral dynamics, with college autonomy, educational excellence, and continued collegiality is, indeed, a tremendous challenge for the future.

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CHAPTER



Bill Harlan addresses a group in Sacramento, protesting funding cuts to community colleges in the spring of 1984.

A Look at District Finances: Where Did All the Money Go?

Chris Leivas

The Contra Costa Community College District (District) has struggled, along with the rest of the California Community College System, to balance budgets and develop transparent fiscal policies, in spite of an increasingly adversarial economic climate. The author of this essay, Chris Leivas, is vice president, finance and administration, at Diablo Valley College (DVC). Leivas worked as a certified public accountant for a firm that conducted college audits, and headed accounting at Santa Rosa Junior College, before

joining the District Office finance staff in 1988. He took on the finance role at DVC in 1991–92, but for about eight months, he worked simultaneously at DVC and the District Office, which allowed him to become a student of fiscal policy at both the District and college level. In this instructive piece, Leivas shares some history that he gleaned from his colleagues in each workplace and his own astute observations.

OVER THE YEARS, a variety of statewide fiscal programs have had a huge impact on District finances. Few of the programs have made it easier to operate or have provided any new resources. In the following pages, the long-term effects of these programs and the key financial events of the past 20 years will be examined, in an effort to provide a snapshot of what has contributed to the current District financial picture and the available means to move forward successfully.

Let's first look at the significant budget reductions the District has experienced in the past two decades:

- 1992–93—operating funds were cut 5 percent and the colleges reduced their staffing levels for faculty, staff, and managers;
- 2002–03—the District experienced midyear cuts as a result of state restrictions in concurrent enrollments, which required the colleges to make significant reductions to operating funds and hourly teaching budgets;
- 2003–04—the District reduced its classified staffing and management staffing by 10 percent, and reduced college operating funds by 30 percent;
- 2003–05—Partnership for Excellence (PFE) funds were significantly reduced, and salaries were also reduced for all employee groups (salaries were restored in 2006–07 and 2007–08); and
- 2004–05—college carryover funds totaling \$2.7 million were used by the District to balance the budget.

The only so-called boom time in the District during the past two decades was created by the Partnership for Excellence funds, which were first received in 1998 and will be described later in this report. This funding

marked the one time that District colleges were given significant ongoing funds to expand programs and services to students.

Proposition 13: A Taxpayers' Revolt

ANY DISCUSSION OF DISTRICT FINANCES needs to start with the impact of Proposition 13. Community college districts, formerly called *junior college* districts, were established as part of a statewide college district organization. Individual districts were set up as local entities, funded in the main by local funds, which were primarily property taxes. The passage in 1978 of Prop 13, officially titled the People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation, which capped real estate taxes at 1 percent of the full value of a property, had a long-lasting impact on community colleges throughout California. Virtually overnight, college districts and the entire K–14 education system went from being locally funded to being primarily state funded. And although most college districts retained their local oversight boards, as we did with the District Governing Board, the change in funding nevertheless created a bilateral governance system between locally elected boards and the State Board of Governors for Community Colleges.

The shift that gave the state more control in how the District's programs are funded, in turn gave Sacramento greater say in how the District operates. Essentially, the state says, if we are going to fund you, you are going to operate as we want. It controls all categorical program funding, that is, those funds that are part of the budget, and specifies how and where those monies can be spent. Thus, a lot of the power to run the District, and to make any significant changes to the system, was taken away from local control with the passage of Prop 13. From 80 to 86 percent of the District's unrestricted general fund is tied up in salaries, benefits, and fixed payroll costs. This means we have little autonomy to set different financial directions. We are always working on the margin.

Another direct effect of Prop 13 was that because locally assessed property taxes differed widely from district to district, substantial differences in the funding rate per full-time equivalent student (FTES) resulted in the creation of "richer" and "poorer" districts. For about 25 years (until 2006),

the state attempted to resolve this inequity through equalization funding. The final steps of that equalization effort were taken with the implementation of SB 361 (Scott), the Community Colleges Funding Formula Reform

The long-lasting impact of Prop 13 has been the inability of the community college districts to go after new programs and expand existing programs, or to consider funding new positions. It has meant that the best we can afford to finance is a bare-bones system.

legislation. This law offered a more comprehensive form of equalization that recognized fixed costs of operating individual colleges and centers.

Even today, long after the passage of Prop 13, stories abound about the significant layoffs in staff and reductions in programs and services that ensued. The dramatic drop in property tax receipts also created a dilemma for the citizens of California in general, who were forced to confront the chasm between the level of services they wanted and their willingness *to pay* for those services. Proposition 98, passed in 1988, which we will discuss shortly, exemplified this dilemma.

The long-lasting impact of Prop 13 has been the inability of community college districts to go after new programs and expand existing programs, or to consider funding new positions. It has meant that the best we can afford to finance is a bare-bones system.

Student Enrollment Fees

ANOTHER CASUALTY OF PROP 13 was the concept that access to the California Community Colleges System was free. In 1984, the state assessed its first enrollment fee, \$5 per unit with a cap of \$50 per semester. The imposition of the fee severely restricted the other types of fees that colleges could assess their students. In addition, the state used fee increases to help resolve budget issues in two ways: (1) to bring in more revenue, thereby lowering the state's obligation to college districts; and (2) to lower student enrollment

in response to higher fees. A good example of how the state used enrollment fees to solve budget problems occurred in 1992–93 and 1993–94 when, over the two-year period, fees were increased from \$5 per unit to \$13 per unit. Also, holders of bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees were assessed a fee of \$50 per unit. These actions resulted in a statewide enrollment drop of 8.2 percent, or 124,251 students.

The impact of higher enrollment fees on the District reflected the impact on all community colleges in the state: when enrollment fees go up, enrollments usually go down. At Diablo Valley College, it seems, the instructional areas that are typically the most affected are physical education and fine arts, since many students take these classes for recreational reasons.

Proposition 98

IN NOVEMBER 1988, Proposition 98 was passed by the state's voters. Called the Classroom Instructional, Improvement and Accountability Act, the law requires a minimum percentage of the state budget be spent on K–14 education, and guarantees an annual increase in education funding in the state budget. As a result of the act, 40 percent of California's general fund must be spent on education. This initiative also mandates that schools receive a portion of state revenues that exceed the state's apportionment limit. Since passage of the legislation, there has been an ongoing struggle between K–12 and community colleges over the split of Prop 98 funds. Over the years, community colleges have fought to get approximately 10 percent of the funds, which is not a lot of money.

Although Prop 98 provides some protection to funding for K–14 education, the state legislature can suspend Prop 98 and fund K–14 education below the minimum required in the event of a financial emergency. Also, as noted earlier, the passage of Prop 98 exemplifies the ongoing conflict between what level of services the citizens of California want and what they are willing to pay for the services. While Prop 98 restricts a portion of the budget for K–14 education, it offers no provisions for raising the total revenues for the state.

Again, the proposition's impact on this District is the same as it is on all other college districts: it provides some insulation from state budget reductions in hard times and offers full participation in new revenues during good times. The question is, when will we see the good times again?

Program-Based Funding

AS A PART OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE REFORM LEGISLATION (AB 1725) passed in 1988, a new state funding formula known as program-based funding was adopted. It called for developing a model that would fully fund the actual cost of operating a college by funding established budget standards for these six areas:

1. Credit Instruction (using a workload measure of FTES);
2. Instructional Services (using a workload measure of FTES);
3. Student Services (using a workload measure of headcount for new and continuing students);
4. Maintenance and Operations (using a workload measure of square footage for owned space and FTES assigned to leased space);
5. Noncredit Instruction (using a workload measure of FTES); and
6. Institutional Support (based on a percentage of the total standard allocation).

Although funds were allocated in these categories, districts were not required to expend the funds in the categories. Instead, the funds had greater flexibility and could be spent on broad categories and improvement projects. Unfortunately, the funding levels achieved through program-based funding never got close to the funding levels initially suggested for the six specified areas.

Program-based funding did not have much of an impact on the District, which still used an incremental budget approach to develop its annual budget and did not change any of its allocation formulas for the colleges to reflect the six funding categories. As part of the implementation of AB 1725, the District did receive some one-time funds called program improve-

ment funds. Each college was given a significant portion of these funds and did a wide variety of small projects to improve student success.

Partnership for Excellence Funding

IN 1998, the state budget included funding for the Partnership for Excellence (PFE) program. The goals of PFE were to improve success in the areas of student transfers, degrees and certificates, successful course completion, improvement of basic skills, and workforce development. The colleges were given criteria and goals for each of these categories. They were free to choose the projects they believed would allow them to achieve their goals.

The California Community College System received additional monies for PFE for three years (1998–99 to 2000–01). In fiscal years 2003–04 and 2004–05, the state significantly reduced PFE funds due to state budget problems. It then combined PFE funds with the college’s general apportionment funds so that PFE would receive a cost of living adjustment (COLA) each year.

Over the 20-year period covered in this report, PFE funding to the District totaled about \$8.2 million and offered the only time the colleges received significant ongoing funds they could use to expand programs and services to students. But this boon was short-lived. By the 2004–05 fiscal year, colleges were required to cut PFE projects significantly. Nevertheless, many projects still remain that were initially created with PFE funds. (At DVC, these include the Relations with Schools position, the Information Center, expanded tutoring for students, the Workforce Development position, and a Transfer Center coordinator position.)

Over the 20-year period covered in this report, [Partnership for Excellence] funding to the District totaled about \$8.2 million and offered the only time the colleges received significant ongoing funds they could use to expand programs and services to students. But this boon was short-lived. . . .

SB 361 Funding

BEGINNING IN 2006–07, community colleges have been funded under a formula enacted with SB 361, which provides “growth funding for credit courses at a uniform rate across the California Community College System, thereby ensuring that funding remains equalized in the future.” This latest formula was created to meet these needs:

- provide a funding formula that was simpler and more transparent than the program-based funding formula;
- improve the equalization of funding for college districts;
- recognize the fixed costs of operating individual colleges and centers, which will provide more equitable funding for smaller colleges; and
- improve funding for selected noncredit courses.

SB 361 funding provides base funding for each college and state-approved center. The amount that goes to each college is based on its FTES rate. All FTES rates over the base amount are funded on a per-FTES rate.

The District did benefit from SB 361 because it received significant equalization funding. Also, since it is a district with three colleges and an approved center, it received \$10.5 million in the initial year of SB 361 funding. At this writing (in mid-2009), the Chancellor’s Cabinet is reviewing the current allocation formulas for the colleges in hopes of developing an allocation model that more closely reflects the SB 361 formula.

The 2002 and 2006 Facility Bond Measures

IN 2002 AND 2006, Contra Costa County voters passed facility bond measures under the provisions of Proposition 39, which enabled the authorization of bonds by a 55 percent vote of the electorate. These bond measures marked the first time since the passage of Proposition 13 that the District had successfully gone to the voters for a significant amount of local funds. The two bond measures totaled about \$400 million. The District used the bonds—combined with state capital outlay funds, rebates for energy-efficiency projects,

and interest income—to fund a total capital outlay program of about \$582.7 million. The monies funded the completion of major facilities and renovation projects at the colleges, including installation of photovoltaic systems at all three colleges, a new Student Services Center at Contra Costa College, a new bookstore at Diablo Valley College, a new Science Building at Los Medanos College, and a new center at San Ramon. To implement the colleges' facility master plans fully, the District will need to continue to pursue a combination of state and local funding.

Looking Back and Ahead

AT THIS WRITING IN 2009, California is in an unprecedented fiscal crisis due to a structural deficit and a decline in personal income tax, which has resulted in major reductions to all state services. The District continues to face cutbacks and ongoing belt-tightening, making it important to develop a strategy for dealing with funding pressures. On the college level, we don't want to create the downward spiral of cutting classes followed by lowered revenue. Rather, we want to match our schedule to student demand. Higher fees chase students away. We hope never to cut classes that are in demand and affordable.

One of the most difficult aspects of bad economic times is the need to lay off personnel. We laid off some managers and classified staff in the early 1990s and again a decade later. These staff reductions had an impact on the services we were able to provide our students, and it has taken time to get our services back to the level where they need to be. Tough times require that we discover better ways to balance our course offerings and services to students while meeting their needs with available resources. We hope to continue to improve the way we solve these challenging problems.

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C H A P T E R



District Governance Council members Mercy Pono (at left) of Contra Costa College, Jocelyn Iannucci of Diablo Valley College, Krista Ducharme of District Office, and Mike West of Los Medanos College, June 2009.

Making It All Work: Organizing the Classified Staff at the Colleges

Linda Kohler

Decisions about how the Contra Costa Community College District (District) should operate have not always been shared among college faculty, managers, classified staff, students, and Governing Board members, as evidenced in the articles that precede this one. The concept of “shared governance,” in fact, was not officially sanctioned by the education community until 1989. Linda Kohler has been a leader in the representative decision-making process at Los Medanos College (LMC) for nearly as long as she has been a full-time employee, which dates from 1986. In this essay, she describes the process and some of the difficult early days that make her

appreciate today's more forward-thinking workplace. Kohler is a senior accountant and has responsibility for monitoring all categorical funds that go through LMC's Business Office.

THE CLASSIFIED SENATE at Los Medanos College (LMC) represents every classified employee at the college. Its leaders are elected by the senate's members. The senate is led by a nine-member council, which includes a president, a position this writer has held since 1996, and a vice president. If any classified employee has a concern, he or she can raise it before the whole senate during a meeting, or can contact a council member or the president, who will express the concern to the senate on behalf of the member.

The Classified Senate, which is just one part of total shared governance on campus, ensures the representation of all classified employees in the making of decisions about the policies and procedures that govern the operation of the college. The main leadership body at LMC is the Shared Governance Council, made up of management, faculty, classified staff, and student representatives. This forum addresses a variety of planning programs, processes, and tools, such as the college's strategic plan, educational master plan, and technology plan, as well as student equity and accreditation.

The presidents of the Classified Senates of all the colleges and the District Office are also members of the Districtwide Classified Senate Coordinating Council (CSCC), which I have led as chair since 1999. We meet once a month prior to the District Governance Council meeting, where representatives from all four groups determine District policy. Once again, our role is to take issues and concerns back to our local senates for input and discussion. All of this takes time, but it is an important and valuable process.

Reentering the Workplace

I RECEIVED MY ASSOCIATE IN ARTS DEGREE from Diablo Valley College (DVC) in 1972. By the mid-1980s, I was a single mom and arrived at LMC as a reentry student, graduating in 1985 with a certificate of achievement in word processing. I initially worked part-time in the Administration of Justice Department and was hired on a full-time basis in 1986. At the time, there was

not much governance on campus, but a group of us had established something similar to a classified council on our own. We convened frequently as a group and met occasionally with then-president of the college, Chet Case.

The passage of AB 1725 in 1989 formally established shared governance on all California community college campuses. Governance was spelled out fully for faculty senates and management, but the idea that classified employees should be part of shared governance was, frankly, somewhat of an afterthought. Later trailer bills, like SB 235 in 2001, clarified the role of classified senates and unions in the governance process.

To formally establish the Classified Senate, members of our existing council and other interested people met to explore the issues involved in shared governance. We basically asked a lot of questions. What does shared governance mean? How does it impact us? Should we have a voice in governance and should we form a council? What are our rights? What should our role be? Armed with some answers, we organized a committee to write bylaws and set up our first official council of eight elected members. Mike West, now our Public Employees Union, Local One president and a past LMC senate president, was part of that original group. Others included Jo Ann Cookman, Teresa Frahm, John Gonder, Karen Haskell, Jeanne Lundahl, Barb Middleton, and Rosemary Wood. Later, we developed a memo of understanding between the Classified Senate and Local One that is acknowledged by the Governing Board. It clarifies the role of Local One with respect to labor issues and of the Classified Senate in terms of shared governance issues.

Difficult Early Years

THE VIABILITY OF THE SHARED GOVERNANCE process largely depends on the approach taken by the president of the college and his or her administration. President Stan Chin (1991–95) encouraged us to form a senate and become more active and involved in the college. His successor, Raul Rodriguez (1996–2002), had a different philosophy. We had hoped he would also be supportive, but that did not happen. His years in the presidency were difficult for all of us.

I remember the day, during President Rodríguez's tenure, when the District's three college presidents announced they would not be attending District Governance Council meetings in the future. They stated that other management could better represent them, and they have never returned to the council. Before the announcement, the president and one manager from

In the old days, we simply weren't supported by all managers. And if a manager didn't want to be supportive, it wasn't questioned.

each college attended the meetings. Since then, we have two management representatives from each campus. Because the presidents are no longer directly involved in the governance process, council members do not have the opportunity to interact with the presidents of the other campuses.

Some of our struggles in the 1990s were about getting managers to allow people to attend senate meetings or participate on committees. That process is significantly better now; we don't often hear from people that their supervisor won't let them attend. In the old days, we simply weren't supported by all managers. And if a manager didn't want to be supportive, it wasn't questioned.

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I have had an extremely supportive manager in Bruce Cutler, LMC director of business services. His backing has been critical to the success of the senate. In the early days, there were times when I wondered what I should do: should I give up or should I stay just to spite them? Times were that difficult. What I discovered was that you just have to keep pushing. Now I am glad I stayed the course.

Engaging in the Discussion

OUR CURRENT LMC PRESIDENT, Peter García, who arrived in 2003, is a believer. Having a supportive president has made all the difference in our shared governance work. He helped us change the model and wholeheartedly encourages us in everything we do. On the council level, we have three classified representatives, and President García makes sure we are all pres-

ent. He engages us in discussion. He listens to us. I can e-mail him or talk to him about any concern.

Through our leadership team and working with our college president, we have been able to institute a classified resource-allocation process in the last three years that has given us a voice in some important areas, including staffing. Before that, everything was done at the management level. For example, it was a big deal when President Rodriguez said we had received approval for three new, classified full-time equivalent positions, and then proceeded to tell us what they would be. But we had questions *we* wanted to ask: Where are those positions needed? Will there be enough work to keep each new person busy? Are these the right areas for expansion?

Over the years, it has always been important to sit down with faculty and management to complete a program review, which involves determining the effectiveness of a given program. In the past, no process existed for classified staff to take part in such discussions. But we have been able to institute the necessary procedure. Also, we have new classified positions on campus, in addition to several new programs and grants, that have been instituted as a result of a more open and representative program review process.

A year ago, we had an issue with the hiring process at District Office. After evaluating past practices, the senate presidents sat down with Local One, the human resources associate chancellor, and the chancellor. We proposed a change to the HR procedure: the senate would choose a representative to sit on the management hiring committee, and notify Local One at the same time. It can take forever to change policy, but hopefully, this recent accomplishment will prove helpful.

The most valuable thing we can do, and this goes back to President García, is to speak out when something is not working, and then stand by our principles. An example of this was a recent suggestion that health centers be organized by the Student Services Department throughout the District, and the idea was gaining momentum. The LMC Classified Senate looked at all the figures and determined that it would not be a profitable venture. Our senate members wanted to know the source of the funding. At the Governing Board meeting, I got up and said the LMC Classified

Senate disagreed with the majority who thought the suggestion was a good idea. Over time, it became apparent to the administration that the proposed reorganization was not a viable plan. Although it is not always fun to be the dissenter, in the end, it was the right course in this case.

Districtwide Council

I CAN'T RECALL WHOSE BRAINCHILD the Districtwide Classified Senate Coordinating Council was, but it has been in existence since about 1989. The LMC Coordinating Council is modeled after the Faculty Senate Coordinating Council. We have bylaws, and our board includes the local senate

Each campus developed its own shared governance model for each of its senates. The LMC and Contra Costa College models are closely aligned. Diablo Valley College set up a model based on clusters and now operates through divisions.

president and one other member whom the local senate chooses. Each campus developed its own shared governance model for each of its senates. The LMC and Contra Costa College models are closely aligned. Diablo Valley College set up a model based on clusters and now operates through divisions. A primary project in 2008 involved helping DVC's new Classified Senate president with the accreditation process and helping her understand how shared governance should work.

In the mid-1990s, CSCC determined that it wanted to hold a conference for classified staff across the District. We struggled for funds. Our managers questioned if this was a wise use of taxpayer money. What could we possibly learn? Could we really be trusted by ourselves for a day? It took the council two years, but we did it—and Job Links was born. This conference has developed into an annual professional development day for classified staff, and I think it is one of the best things we do. At the first conference, we educated attendees about what shared governance was, and that discussion is still part of the agenda. We now include faculty and outside speakers as workshop present-

ers, and provide computer-skills training. A subcommittee of the coordinating council organizes the event each year. We also began meeting with the chancellor at least every other month to bring issues to her attention. That resulted in the establishment of the Chancellor's Chat program four years ago. It is a forum that gives the chancellor the opportunity to address subjects that are of concern to classified employees.

Engaging Our Members

MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED in the various governance bodies usually only connect with the concept of shared governance at the annual Job Links conference or the Chancellor's Chat program. What is important for those of us who are involved is to get people to the event or the meeting, and then give them the opportunity to become engaged.

In the 1980s, when the campus was smaller, we all had the feeling that we were one big family. Now we realize we are a bigger family, and as we keep growing, maintaining that family feeling is harder. My belief is that if people become more active in the work of the senate and shared governance, they will feel more a part of our college family.

My involvement has enabled me to increase my leadership skills and improve my demeanor and my confidence. In the beginning, I had to struggle to participate, but I felt I needed to be involved. Shared governance has helped me grow and has given me the opportunity to meet and work with different people—classified staff, faculty, managers, students, and Governing Board members. Being part of the senate and the coordinating council is about learning the organization, enhancing our own abilities, interacting with people, and discovering what issues affect all of us. I am passionate about it because I have seen it work. It is great to be able to participate in campus life, and to make the college and the District a better place.

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CHAPTER



Mark Edelstein (at left), Tom Beckett, Bill Harlan, Phyllis Peterson, and Cheryl LeMay at San Ramon Valley Campus groundbreaking, 2003.

Leaving Home: How Diablo Valley College's San Ramon Campus Was Created

Bill Harlan

For the first three decades of its existence, the Contra Costa Community College District (District) settled into a comfortable pattern. The original vision of a fourth campus in the south central part of the county was but a dim memory in the minds of a few. [If Drummond McCunn, the first superintendent, had remained in charge, it would undoubtedly have been named South Central Contra Costa Junior College (SCCCJC).] In this account of the origins of the new San Ramon Campus (SRC), I show how the idea of such an institution was resurrected as a reaction to growth in

the neighboring Chabot District. The first steps were hesitant and underwhelming, and the failure of that effort made the final establishment of an outreach center all the more difficult. The search for a site mirrored the evolution of the vision of what this new college campus would be.

Necessity drove the initial decision to found this effort with a partnership, the Center for Higher Education (CHE). It would be the first time all three segments in California's public higher education system would work collaboratively. Nowadays one can find such endeavors elsewhere throughout the state. It was a partnership that was particularly beneficial to Diablo Valley College (DVC), first in gaining entry into the Bishop Ranch Business Park, but more importantly in providing a model for how we would have to modify our instruction to serve a new kind of clientele in a new age. The model of an educational partnership was carried over into our successful search for a permanent site. For almost 25 years, CHE/SRC served as a kind of research-and-development operation for DVC, influencing what was taught and how it was scheduled at the main campus.

This account covers the critical first six years of the operation at CHE in its original home in Bishop Ranch Business Park. It was a critical period in establishing the direction for what has become a great new institution. It was a time when a few people really had an impact on the future and did so, despite multiple frustrations, with a sense of hope and joy.

“HEY, COME AND LOOK AT THE NEW COLLEGE!” People clustered around an architectural model enclosed in plastic and pointed out the details of an exciting, new venture in the neighborhood. It was around 1990, and the Center for Higher Education had been in operation for about five years. Our efforts to locate a site for a permanent campus led us to this community planning group, working under the auspices of the City of San Ramon. It was composed of representatives from all kinds of groups and public agencies, all clamoring for some space and a possible facility in the mammoth Dougherty Valley project—a large, open area of old ranch land east of the city, slated for development.

The developers had already agreed that when the planned 11,000 units were built, they would automatically be incorporated into the city. And San Ramon's eager planning department was already encouraging *selected* orga-

nizations to get in line: schools, churches, public safety, senior centers, child care, even soccer clubs! However, initially the college had not been invited to join the group. It was only after we approached one of the developers of the Dougherty Valley, Windemere Properties, and urged them to provide space for a new college campus, that we learned of the planning group and were invited to join.

In conversation with other members of the group at the first several meetings, I sensed an undercurrent of resentment that we were coming to the process late. We needed to get in line behind all the other nonprofits, which had been working with the city for years on getting dedicated space. When the District was finally invited to make its presentation about a possible campus, I had arrived early to set up this scale model of the “new” campus right in the middle of the meeting room. The model showed a number of one-story buildings grouped around a sylvan campus and surrounded by acres of parking. The planning people gawked and expressed surprise that the District was so far along in its planning process that it could afford to have this extensive architectural model ready to go. Before Chancellor Jack Carhart, representing the District, began our presentation, I called everyone’s attention to the date on the model, which they had all overlooked. The model for the “new” San Ramon campus had been assembled in 1965, long before there was even a City of San Ramon!

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At the time of its inception, the Contra Costa Community College District decided that after the initial campuses—Contra Costa College (CCC) in San Pablo and Diablo Valley College (DVC) in Pleasant Hill—the third college in the District should be located in San Ramon, near the intersection of San Ramon Valley Boulevard and Crow Canyon Road on what was at that time a large ranch specializing in fruit orchards, Bishop Ranch. (Ironically, the proposed campus, according to local legend, would have been located on land that was eventually occupied by the headquarters of Sunset Development Company, developers of Bishop Ranch Business Park.)

In 1964, the District put together a ballot measure for a bond to improve the two existing campuses and to purchase and begin construction of the San Ramon campus. I can remember, as a young teacher in my first year at DVC, phoning voters from a phone bank in an architect's office in Martinez, trying to drum up support for the bond measure. As with most bond efforts in the District's history, the one in 1965 failed by a narrow margin. The District's attention then shifted east to the surplus property at old Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, which had been acquired by the District in the 1950s. The District's third college, Los Medanos College (LMC), opened in a few years. The 1965 model of the San Ramon campus went into the college warehouse at DVC until someone stumbled across it a few years after we opened the Center for Higher Education (CHE) in 1985 and sent it to me. We used the model as an illustration of the District's long-term commitment to build a campus in the San Ramon Valley.

Around 1967, DVC began to offer a few evening classes at Pittsburg High School as part of the preparation for the eventual opening of Los Medanos. A similar process was taking place in Livermore, where Chabot College began putting together what would eventually become Las Positas College. What was initially called the Livermore Center opened around 1975, and it had an immediate impact on the dynamics of education in the Tri-Valley area.

Forming a Broader Focus

WHILE AT DVC, I thought of San Ramon as simply being part of South County. My focus went no further than the county line. Once I was assigned to the Center for Higher Education, I quickly learned that San Ramon is part of the Tri-Valley area with Livermore Valley to the east, Amador Valley (Pleasanton) to the south, and San Ramon Valley (San Ramon and Danville) to the north. In many respects, the county line is simply an arbitrary marker, and geography shapes a different dynamic for the residents of the interconnected valleys. With the opening of a college operation in Livermore, students in San Ramon and Danville began to flow toward the nearest and most convenient source for classes, and DVC began to feel

threatened on its southern flank. At the same time, the opening of Los Medanos prompted similar concerns about losing students to our sister college to the east. (There was great anguish over the District's decision to "give" LMC exclusive access to students from Clayton Valley High School to try and generate enough enrollments at the new campus.)

It was in this context that DVC framed its regressive response to the competition in Livermore. At that time, students who lived in one college district could not attend community college in another district without getting permission from their "home" district. Students from the San Ramon Valley began to find their way to Pleasant Hill to seek permission to go to school in Livermore. I can remember a serious discussion around the table in the faculty lounge about requiring such students to go all the way to the District Office in Martinez, if they could find it, to get their permission slips signed! Being hard-nosed was not a viable long-term policy, under the circumstances.

Throughout the state, especially in suburban Los Angeles and the South Bay, thousands of students were making similar decisions as new community college campuses sprang up. Finally, the state responded by allowing free-flow enrollment among the college districts.

DVC's proactive response to the challenge from Livermore was to go into competition. The college moved toward opening its own outreach center in the San Ramon Valley in the same way it had helped prepare for the creation of Los Medanos—by offering classes in the evenings at the three high schools in the valley: Monte Vista, San Ramon, and California. It was a modest beginning, a few general education courses. I can remember teaching a creative writing class at San Ramon High in Danville around 1977. At the same time, the college officials under the direction of President Bill Niland began searching for a possible site in the valley, a search that we would end up duplicating in the next decade.

The search centered on two possible facilities in San Ramon. A warehouse for Brueners Furniture on Crow Canyon Road was considered, but eventually, I believe, became part of the San Ramon Valley Schools corporation yard. The second intriguing possibility was a relatively new training facility operated by the Laborers' Union and located west of the Alcosta exit from Interstate 680. The union proposed a partnership whereby we

would use their facility and offer classes to their trainees. I know some college officials were reluctant to enter such a partnership, especially with a union. Things in San Ramon were changing rapidly with the opening of Bishop Ranch Business Park, and the college was unsure of what kind of enrollments it might attract. In 1976, Dean of Instruction John Kelly wrote a memo trying to foresee what kind of an operation might be feasible. Kelly predicted an eventual 5,000 student population in an off-campus center that would remain part of DVC. His projections of 30 years ago have turned out to be remarkably prescient.

While the college examined its options, someone decided that we needed to establish a physical presence as soon as possible, and so the District brought in a portable classroom in a trailer that was parked in the back parking lot at California High School. It was just a class space, but it promised that Diablo Valley College would provide its students in the valley an educational opportunity. The location of the trailer was significant: we still thought in terms of tying in with the K–12 schools. The short-lived trailer episode took place in 1977 or early 1978 and did not last long. In June 1978, Proposition 13, the Jarvis-Gann Initiative, passed, and Diablo Valley College changed forever.

In the Wake of Proposition 13

WITH THE SUDDEN AND SUBSTANTIAL LOSS of state funding, DVC cut programs, closed some facilities—like the museum and child care—and raised enrollment limits. The trailer and the classes in the high schools in South County were gone before classes started again in the fall of 1978. It was an understandable reaction to the trauma of the moment, but it made it more difficult for us to begin again six years later. We had to work hard to demonstrate that the San Ramon Center, when it did return, would not simply vanish overnight, as the trailer had. By contrast, the outreach program of the Chabot District in Livermore continued to grow, and the process began to transform it into a recognized college center, Las Positas. Counselors from that operation now openly visited California High and San Ramon High to recruit students, and Los Positas College enrollments grew.

By 1984, things had changed in the Contra Costa District. There was a new chancellor, Jack Carhart, and a new president at DVC, Phyllis Peterson. There was a greater emphasis placed on growth, as the formulas developed in the aftermath of Prop 13 increasingly favored those districts that could maintain a steady increase in enrollment. Perhaps the major factor in encouraging a renewed interest in the San Ramon Valley, however, was concern about the effect of the 680/24 interchange project. For years, the interchange where Highway 24 intersects Interstate 680 had been a bottleneck as traffic narrowed into a single lane. The long-awaited remedy promised to be a decade-long traffic nightmare. Chancellor Carhart in particular was convinced that the construction delays would make it even harder for those students who lived south of Walnut Creek to travel to DVC in Pleasant Hill. He added his sense of urgency to Phyllis Peterson's desire to find a way to alleviate some of the space crunch DVC was experiencing.

So in 1984, the college started a search for a possible facility for an outreach program in the San Ramon Valley. A joint administrative-Faculty Senate committee, called the South County Committee, was formed to look for possible sites. As a faculty representative, I served on that committee, along with Ralph Fowler. In the summer of 1984, the president authorized additional time for the search, and Joe Patrick, a social science instructor, and I continued looking. Almost all the sites we looked at were schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, schools which at that time were thought to have surplus space. I remember examining Country Club School on Blue Fox Way in San Ramon. I believe we looked at the old Charlotte Wood School in downtown Danville. Later, Dean Terry Shoaff and I seriously considered Alamo School, just off Livorna Road. I can remember commenting, half-facetiously, that we would have to raise the urinals if we took any of these sites as our center of operations. (Karl Drexel had faced the same plumbing problem when he was "Dean of the Latrine," charged with getting the old school building in Martinez ready for the first DVC classes back in 1950.)

In the meantime, DVC had started once again offering evening classes in the local high schools. While we had a few classes at Monte Vista on Stone Valley Road in Alamo and at California High on Broadmoor in San

Ramon, our principal site was San Ramon High on Danville Boulevard in downtown Danville. It was centrally located, and increasingly we were able to use some of the specialized classrooms for classes like art and music. Offering classes at the high schools always poses its own set of challenges, as I learned when I became director.

The most significant step in this initial search for a site for our outreach was the assignment of Terry Shoaff to the task. Terry had come to DVC as a dean of students, but his background and professionalism had made him useful to the president in a number of different capacities. Terry regularized the search and helped to focus it. We looked at a lot of different kinds of places. He was not wedded to the idea of locating in a school. In fact, Terry believed that most of our clientele would be working adults and not primarily 18- to 22-year-olds initially. Finally, his contacts led us to discover that UC Berkeley Extension and Hayward State University Extension were both looking for a site for their classes as well. Terry had visited the Aurora Campus in Denver, which combined operations of the University of Colorado, a state university, and a local community college, and we used the idea of the Aurora Campus as our model as we considered a similar kind of partnership.

I do not know who first proposed joining forces, but I do know that Shoaff was the driving force. In Gary Matkin from UC Extension we had a kindred spirit, one who was willing to find ways to make things happen despite the weight of institutional inertia. Hayward State initially was less of a presence, but those who headed its extension operation saw the advantages of pooling our resources. Shortly after we began CHE, Herb Graw was named the head of Hayward State Extension and became an enthusiastic and innovative partner. In the late spring and early summer of 1985, the search for a site grew more intense. One of the most interesting locations was an empty Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatre on San Ramon Valley Boulevard. It had about 5,500 square feet, with a parking lot in the front, and the owner was willing to allow us to modify the interior to accommodate the three schools. However, another buyer was anxious to secure the property for bingo games, and we were unable to reach an agreement. The fear was that *we would not have enough enrollment to utilize the space!* It was an unfortunate loss, because I had really liked the idea of being named the chancellor of Chuck E. Cheese University!

A New Partnership

THE IDEA OF LOCATING IN BISHOP RANCH, the premier office park in the Tri-Valley, represented a quantum leap in thinking about what kind of institution we would be. The decision was driven in part by the new partnership. Both UC and Hayward were interested in adult learners, and they knew such students would respond much more favorably to an upscale office complex than a run-down elementary school. It was also driven by the professionals the District now employed in the search. Since the community college would use the lion's share of the space, it was decided that we would be the primary tenant when we did locate a place to lease. (We were not thinking in terms of a permanent facility at this point.)

The District employed two specialists in commercial real estate rentals, Mike Hurd and Don Morton, who worked for a realtor, Westmoreland, in Walnut Creek. They would play an important role in our first six years of operation. When we finally did open the Center for Higher Education in October of 1985, they presented us with an artificial silk tree that sat at the entrance and fell over with great regularity. Hurd and Morton began looking for locations in upscale office parks where they had contacts, and it was they who first brought us to look at an empty office suite at One Annabel Lane, in Bishop Ranch #1.

In many respects, it was a bold move. This original building in the Bishop Ranch complex had become the headquarters for Sunset Development, the company owned by Alex Mehran, which owned and operated the park. The company offices were on the second floor, and we would locate on the ground floor. According to stories we heard from the realtors, Mehran was reluctant to rent to the community college, commenting that he feared a lot of students loitering around the entrance, and tossing apple cores in the parking lot would affect the corporate image. It was only the allure of the partnership with UC and Hayward State that convinced him this was a sound move for his business.

The college signed the lease for about 5,000 square feet of space at One Annabel Lane in July 1985. The location, Suite 110, was on the ground floor, just to the right off the central courtyard of the building. In those initial stages of the development of the center, there were real concerns

that we would be unable to fill the space with students and that we would be a financial burden on DVC and the District. These concerns explained why we never sought to lease the small suite prominently located right in front of us. This highly visible office was the logical place for our admissions and counseling offices, and yet we never tried to lease it. Our entrance was tucked around the corner; over the years that we were there, students looking for the center must have been a frequent nuisance to the people in the realty office that occupied the space. After we left, the University of San Francisco occupied our old center and added the suite out front.

Terry Shoaff and Grant Cooke had arranged that I make a dramatic entrance, entering from the back of the room and striding down the aisle to the accompaniment of the theme from *2001*.

At about the same time the lease was signed, I took over as the director of the center. President Phyllis Peterson called me in and told me about the appointment. I was charged with the day-to-day operation, with developing the instructional program and facilities, locating the instructors, and searching for a permanent location. The job description was pretty vague because we did not really know what all would be involved. My appointment was

announced in late August at the faculty-wide meeting held in the Forum at DVC. Terry Shoaff and Grant Cooke had arranged that I make a dramatic entrance, entering from the back of the room and striding down the aisle to the accompaniment of the theme from *2001*. That irreverent tone was in keeping with the general atmosphere at the center in the early years.

A Name for the Center

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THREE INSTITUTIONS began meeting as a coordinating group even before the first classes were offered. Our first order of business was to figure out a name for whatever it was we were running. It took considerable discussion to come up with the name: The Center for Higher Education. We could not call ourselves a “college” because of the

UC element, and we could hardly call ourselves a “university” operation because of DVC’s participation. So the compromise was CHE. In later years, people would comment that the name sounded like something that a committee came up with, which was exactly what it was.

The space we took over would eventually become three large classrooms, two medium classrooms, and six smaller auxiliary spaces. The configuration of the center was a function of the internal architecture and the desire to provide dedicated classrooms for each of the three partners. We could not change some of the interior space because of load-bearing walls, and Sunset made the lease rate contingent upon having to do the fewest improvements possible. Therefore we inherited much of the shape of the center. There was a single, long hall that ran the length of the space. Immediately to the right was an open area with a counter and work space that became our admissions operation. At the rear of this space was a large office with windows looking out on the parking lot and the entrance to the central courtyard of the complex. This would become my initial office.

To the immediate left of the main entrance was a short entry hall that led back to a small room overlooking the freeway. This was our break room at first and housed several vending machines. Next on the left off the main hallway was a small, windowless room, directly across from the admissions counter, which was our locked storage room. It was used for audiovisual equipment, supplies, and a growing mountain of paper.

The first classroom to the right, Room 1, was a large computer lab, the largest room at CHE. Chancellor Jack Carhart had taken a keen interest in the design and operation of the center, and he had mandated that this computer room would be the centerpiece of DVC’s operation. Based on his experience at Los Medanos, he had insisted that we incorporate two windows into the wall, one opening on the admissions area and one on my office. This would allow what he called “line-of-sight supervision,” so that a certificated person, namely me, could supervise what was happening in the room, technically providing instruction for purposes of collecting state apportionment. In reality, we never used the windows, dubbed “Carhart casements,” for supervision of any kind, and the windows remained covered almost all the time. We installed 24 IBM PCs, the state-of-the-art in 1985, on heavy-duty tables—two computers to a table. The cabling and

lock-down system on each unit took a great deal of time and energy and was overseen by Jerry Underwood, head of computer operations at DVC. I remember helping unload the computers and flattening the boxes they came in. (Barry Bormann, the business manager at DVC, collected all the empty boxes and drove them, with great difficulty, to a recycling center in Martinez to help raise money for his son's Boy Scout troop. Barry joked that he would have been better off just to give the money and forget the boxes.) The care, feeding, and security of those computers became one of our foremost concerns in the early days of CHE.

Across the hall from the computer lab, on the left-hand side, was Room 2, a large, sunny space that looked out on 680 and was dedicated to Hayward State. It held about 45 students comfortably. CSUH supplied its own furniture. The second classroom on the right off the hallway, Room 3, held about 45 students and was dedicated for use by UC Extension. The furniture for the room was furnished by Extension. The agreement among the partners allowed DVC classes to use both rooms whenever they were not needed by their dedicated user. Across the hall from Room 3 was a small closet, left over from the previous occupant of the space. Next to it was a small office overlooking 680. This space was used variously as a conference room, a staff lounge, faculty office and, on at least one occasion, a classroom.

At the end of the hall were Room 4 on the left and Room 5 on the right. Both these rooms, dedicated for use by DVC, held about 30 students. They were the ones we sought to keep scheduled throughout the day and evening. The furniture in these two rooms, plus the computer lab and the admissions area and offices, was supplied by an office furniture company, located on the San Francisco Peninsula, whose sales representative, Harold Lawrence, was a close friend of Barry Bormann, DVC's business manager. The tables we received for all the rooms were heavy, solid pieces, fitting our sense of corporate décor at the time. The chairs were unwieldy sled-style chairs that would not harm the thick carpet throughout the center, but they became a nightmare to move or store. The thin cushions were attached to the plastic bodies by screws, which frequently broke off or jabbed through the cushions to snag students' clothing. After several years, many of the chairs were unusable and had to be replaced. More important, the furniture worked

against the flexibility of our use of the space. As we grew more confident and experienced in operating the center, we came to make our own decisions about furniture and room layout to ensure that any space could be converted to any instructional use as simply and quickly as possible.

The program for CHE began with the fall semester in 1985, almost two months before the center itself was opened. We continued with our offerings at the local high schools, especially San Ramon. As part of the effort to kick off the new center and the expanded offerings, the DVC marketing department, under the direction of Public Information Officer Grant Cooke, conducted a survey by phone to determine the potential interest and the kinds of curriculum people in the San Ramon area wanted during the day. The results were favorable, but pretty vague. We scheduled the general education classes we had been offering in the evening. Our primary means of announcing our program was with a newspaper flyer that went to all the homes in San Ramon, Danville, and Alamo. That flyer would become our trademark each semester for the next 15 years, coming out at the beginning of each semester and sometimes in the middle of the semester. The flyer was the brainchild of Grant Cooke and its production and distribution became a major task for the staff at CHE, as we assumed responsibility for its content and layout. UC Extension provided the help with the graphics in the initial layout and for the CHE stationery we used. They had the last page of the flyer reserved for their classes. Hayward State got the next to the last page. Costs were shared proportionately.

Our “Blackboard Jungle”

MY FIRST OFFICIAL FUNCTION as the director was to furnish on-site supervision at San Ramon High in the evenings. San Ramon High had been built in the 1940s and had seen little improvement since then. The premier high school in this affluent community was poorly lit, had inferior signage, and was scruffy at best. The desk chairs in the classrooms were uncomfortable, and there were no amenities for adults in three-hour evening classes. In the art class, which met in a studio classroom at the far end of the campus,

students literally had to use the nearby lawn to relieve their bladders since there was no bathroom readily available. Most of our classes were grouped in one building around a central work space, where we set up temporary admissions/enrollment and bookstore operations using employees from the main campus. There were between six and eight classrooms in use in this complex. That first night, it was very hot, and I was running around checking to make sure the enrollment process went smoothly, the rooms were open, and the class minimums were met. At one point, I had to go into the darkened restrooms to try to repair the lights, without success. I remember thinking how terrible it was that we asked the adults of these communities to attend classes under such terrible physical conditions. Then I realized that youngsters had to learn in these same wretched rooms for seven hours a day for four years. The adults who were enduring the “blackboard jungle” were the ones who would have to pass a bond measure and improve these conditions. It would take almost 10 years before that happened.

One of the classes was a section of Women’s Health, taught by an instructor who was a forthright and outspoken feminist. She called me in to thread an unfamiliar film projector for her while she continued with her opening lecture. Her remarks focused on the various ways men caused health problems for women—physically, mentally, and financially. I remember sweating over the projector and feeling as if every eye in the room was fixed on me as the embodiment of male oppression. It took an uncomfortably long time to get the projector working, at which point the instructor cheerfully thanked me. Despite the challenges, the opening evening went well, and we were off to the races. The real test was to come with the opening of the center itself in mid-October.

The lease on the space at One Annabel Lane had been signed in late July, and the work to strip the old office space, reconfigure the rooms, and prepare everything, went by with lightning speed—at least for someone like me who is used to the snail’s pace of academic construction. One reason for the haste was that because we were using leased space, it did not need to meet the stringent requirements of state regulations, especially for seismic safety. The other reason was that the owners of office complexes were used to this kind of change. They needed to get new tenants into offices as

quickly as possible with a minimum of complaint in order to start collecting rent. In about two months, we were ready to begin operation at CHE.

And so around the first of October, I made the most important personnel decision I was to make in my 15 years at the center: I hired an assistant, Suz Stephens. She had worked in a variety of jobs in the private sector, but never for a school. In her previous positions, she had operated as a high-energy, can-do employee. She brought that same commitment to CHE. She was hired as an admissions and records clerk, but over the course of her career at CHE, she literally did everything, except teach formally in the classroom.

I spoke earlier of the flexibility we had to learn when it came to the physical use of our space. We learned that same flexibility when it came to the people who were the heart of our venture, only we had to learn that lesson more quickly than the lesson with the furniture. We were spawned by DVC, a mature institution with tasks clearly defined by detailed job descriptions and reinforced by contracts. However, we were a miniscule operation with a tiny budget and never enough people to do all we were asked to do. We were absolutely dependent upon people like Suz, who were committed to the enterprise and willing to do whatever it took to make it succeed. Someone once said of Suz Stephens, “She’s the glue that holds CHE together.”

For a couple of weeks, Suz and I worked feverishly getting the center ready for its grand opening. There was furniture to be arranged and announcements to get out. Suz discovered a trove of paintings that had been put into storage at DVC after the Prop 13 cutbacks in 1978. She “borrowed” a number of pieces to hang down the long hallway to give our humble surroundings a more welcoming look. I “requisitioned” unused furniture from the main campus; it never appeared to be missed.

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A Most Alarming System

WE HAD AN ELABORATE ALARM SYSTEM installed to protect our valuable computers. The security company, AHM, sent a representative to school us in the various codes that enabled us to enter the center and then to get into the computer room. We were taught the special code that would signal we were being held hostage, and the procedure to follow to signal the alarm control center that we were actually all right when the alarm went off and the company called to check on us. This happened with such alarming regularity, all who worked at CHE eventually had the abort word “CHENO” seared in our memories.

In mid-October 1985, we held the grand opening of CHE. Following a big ceremony attended by city and college officials, we offered DVC’s first daytime courses in the San Ramon Valley since the closure of the portable classroom program in 1978. After all the urgency and hoopla, the results were an anti-climax. The classes, for the most part, drew meager enrollments and many had to be canceled. In part, this initial failure was the result of having to start classes late in the traditional school year; it would take us some time to accustom our potential students to the idea that the instructional calendar could be made more flexible with what we called our “midterm” classes.

The major reason for our lack of success was that we had to learn to rethink how and when we offered classes. I had put our initial schedule together based on what was “best practice” at that time on the Pleasant Hill campus: classes held for an hour, three times a week for 17 weeks, preferably between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., when most instructors liked to teach. But most of our potential students at CHE were busy with the rest of their lives at those choice hours, and 17 weeks was an unrealistic commitment for many of them. We had to change what we offered, when we offered it, and the format in which we taught. Fortunately for us, we had the experience of our partners at CHE to draw on. Most of the courses that UC and Hayward State Extension offered were short-term and intensive, designed for working adults. Those students would quickly become the target audience for much of our day program.

After that early disappointment, we began to revise our curriculum to accommodate our new situation. Our most significant change was in computer applications. In those days, if a student wished to learn WordPerfect, he or she would have to enroll in a three-unit computer science or business course that lasted an entire semester and covered the theoretical framework for all computer applications, following the paradigm of the regular degree program. At the suggestion of Jeff Mock, who taught math and computer science at DVC, we began to experiment with shorter courses. Very quickly, we hit upon the model of the 18-hour course, offering beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses on individual applications. We offered these as one-unit classes, based on the model of the three-unit degree course with 54 semester hours. Later, we would reduce the unit value to half a unit to enable part-time instructors to pick up even more of the workshops as part of their load. Because there was no established course description for what we wanted to offer, we often had to teach these classes under the title of Topics in Computer Science. It took us about six years to establish a separate department of Computer Information Systems, which became our premier program.

It was a measure of the success of our computer training program that within a couple of years, the two classrooms in the center dedicated to exclusive use by DVC, Rooms 4 and 5, were both converted to computer labs, one with more advanced IBM PCs and one with Macs. CHE offered the first instruction on Apple computers in a DVC program. We were able to grow the computer program because the rest of our program grew rapidly enough to support two expansions of facilities at CHE. The first was across the courtyard from the original suite, and added three classrooms and a small room for book sales. (One of the first people to sell books was my son, Will; the joke was that he had to sell them from a narrow closet, and we packed the boxes of books in so tight that he had to sell them all in order to get out.)

The second expansion was also across the central courtyard and added three classrooms and a new student lounge. In addition to these rooms, we used facilities throughout the community for our rapidly expanding evening program. In addition to classes at all three of the area high

schools—San Ramon, Monte Vista in Alamo, and California High in San Ramon—we used Charlotte Wood Intermediate, the PG&E Learning Center in San Ramon, the Danville Bowl, and a number of other sites in local offices around the valley. At one time we had 12 different “off-center” locations we were using for instruction. It was the need for still more space and the end of our lease at One Annabel Lane that led us to relocate CHE in 1991 to the Crow Canyon Commons business complex half a block north.

Part-time Faculty

OUR FACULTY IN THOSE EARLY DAYS was largely part-time instructors. The first full-timer who came to CHE was Carol Jones from the business department at DVC. Carol taught a number of business classes, including our popular courses in word processing; she left at the end of her first year with us to take a position at CSU Long Beach. Carol was followed by Judy Sunyama, who really shaped the business curriculum at CHE, especially in computer applications for business. She was rather slight and had a quiet voice; she used to stand on a step stool and use a portable bullhorn in order to be seen and heard in the computer classroom. After Judy returned to the main campus, Harry Baggett, who lived nearby, came to teach with us. Harry’s primary assignment at DVC had been accounting and beginning business courses. At CHE, he retrained himself and took on assignments in a number of different areas. He was particularly successful in teaching Introduction to the Personal Computer to a constant flow of older students. He used to say that they were an ideal audience for him because he had gone through the same kind of struggle to learn new technology that they faced. Around 1990, we added a second full-time computer instructor, Scott Hill, who played a key role in drafting the course outlines for the new computer information systems curriculum.

As our general education program finally began to grow, we had a number of part-time instructors who became regulars. Donna Atkins taught English at CHE and later became a full-time instructor and the first chair of the CHE Division. Dianna Matthias taught biology with little in the way of equipment or a specialized facility and later became our first full-timer in

biology and oceanography. Our first speech part-timer was Denise Ashby, who lived locally and was very popular with her students.

We tried a number of different courses at CHE—whatever students indicated an interest in. We once offered a course in tai chi, despite the prohibition by Sunset Development that we teach no PE at the center. Students would go into Room 3, stack the chairs and fold up the tables to clear a space and then go through their tai chi routines, quietly. The only problem was that the instructor insisted upon a New Age recording of ethereal music to establish the appropriate mood. This led to complaints from our neighbors upstairs that something fishy was going on because of the “weird music.” My primary contact with Sunset was vice president Peter Oswald, a frequent visitor who worked with me to ease the adjustment of the academic and business worlds. On another occasion, a concerned Oswald was in my office because the biology instructor, Dianna Matthias, conducted a demonstration of the process of natural selection on the front lawn. She sprinkled small circles of different colored paper (representing the prey) over the grass and had students, on hands and knees, comb over the lawn with a variety of implements from spoons to forceps (representing the predators) to show how certain physical traits led to the survival or disappearance of certain species. Another Oswald visit happened when the drama instructor, Harvey Berman, broke his class into pairs and had them go out into the parking lot and reenact the climatic scene between Stanley and Blanche from *Streetcar Named Desire*. Tennessee Williams meets Alex Mehran.

Two of the most important classified staff people hired were Teri Cornelius and Jan Barnes. Jan was our first computer technician and kept our rapidly growing menagerie of different kinds of computers working under difficult circumstances. She became one of the most versatile of our computer skills instructors. Teri was an admissions clerk with a personable manner and a big heart. She not only counseled students looking for direction; she signed up for many of the classes herself, especially if it looked as if the class would have to be canceled for lack of enrollment. We used to joke that Teri was the acting dean of students and instruction at CHE because she knew more than any of us about what was really going on. It was Teri who, on her own initiative, began a series of noontime “brown bag lectures” once a week on topics of student interest. One of the most successful was a

mini-symposium on human sexuality involving our instructors in biology, speech, psychology, and English.

Rapid Growth Ahead

FOR FIVE YEARS, our enrollments grew rapidly and with them the demands on our staff. The computer workshops were especially popular on the weekends, when we would teach an 18-hour class in some application in a single weekend (three hours on Friday evening, nine hours on Saturday, and six hours on Sunday). Because we were in operation seven days a week, we were always short of staff to provide support. Our workforce problems were compounded because we were always losing personnel to the main DVC campus; a person anxious to get a job at the Pleasant Hill campus would take a position in San Ramon and then transfer out as soon as the first opening appeared. At one point, we had supplied 20 classified employees to Pleasant Hill! Nor were we able to attract many local people from the upscale community to take low-paying, hourly jobs at CHE. As a consequence, we found ourselves drafting our own children to work at the center to cover shifts or provide support. Both my kids, Will and Heather, began their working careers at CHE while still in high school; Suz Stephens' daughter, Tara, was a mainstay; Teri Cornelius's kids, Thor and Nina, both worked at CHE before they went off to college. Later, Chancellor Bob Jensen would order me to "stop the nepotism at CHE" and would increase our budget so we were finally able to hire long-term employees. Our kids were happy to comply with the chancellor's edict, although both Heather Harlan and Tara Stephens went on to work a number of years at DVC.

In 1990, our lease at One Annabel Lane was up, and we entered into negotiations with Sunset Development for a renewal and a dramatic increase in space. The District Business Manager Bill Brown took the lead in the bargaining, which ended in a rather tense meeting between Brown, Jack Carhart, and myself, with Peter Oswald and Alex Mehran. Brown, playing hardball, tried to get the rent decreased, but Mehran was adamant. We ended our tenancy on an unpleasant note, coupled with what was to happen in the final months.

Once again we asked the realty team of Hurd and Morton to find a place for us to locate. They did, just half a block to the north in an office complex on Crow Canyon Place. Crow Canyon Commons consisted of four large buildings, one of which would become our home for the next 15 years. Our capacity at 3150 Crow Canyon Place was 25,000 square feet; in just five years, we had grown to five times our original size, and no one was worried anymore about whether we would have too much space. However, the move had unforeseen consequences. We were now located within the city of San Ramon, and our new home was not zoned for schools. This meant that before we could move in, we had to get the approval of the City Planning Department. The staff was leery of the impact on parking we might create, especially on the limited parking at the shopping center across the street and at the office complex next door. Our plan was to begin operations at the new location with the 1991 summer session, so we started securing approvals in fall 1990.

Dealing with Consequences

THE FIRST THING THE PLANNING STAFF DEMANDED was a detailed list of what we would offer in the summer of 1991, along with enrollment maximums and staffing levels, so they could determine how many parking spaces we would use. In October, I put together a schedule, concentrating all our courses, which had been spread throughout the valley, into our new spacious quarters. The summer program we had traditionally offered at CHE during the day doubled. I met with the city planning director, Phil Wong, who assured me that with nine months before the beginning of summer classes, in June 1991, we would have more than enough time to satisfy the few requirements the city had. The principal requirements were a parking study by an outside consultant and approval by the city's parking planner. That process dragged on and on. We had to get a second study done, when the city was not satisfied with the first one. I met frequently with the parking planner and refined the data he required. Meanwhile, surrounding businesses raised concerns and the approval was delayed again. In the spring semester of 1991, I went on sabbatical to complete work on my

doctorate. I left my good friend Les Birdsall from DVC in charge as the acting director. I assured him that everything was in place for his six-month assignment: the spring semester classes were all staffed and the summer schedule was ready to go. That was probably the biggest blunder of my professional career, and I left a friend to deal with the consequences.

While I was busy finishing my dissertation, the zoning approvals remained in limbo. Our new landlords were reluctant to begin the extensive remodeling we required until the move was approved. Les realized we would not be able to hold summer classes in our new facilities, and so he had to secure an extension of our lease at One Annabel Lane. If this delay in our moving out increased tensions with Sunset Development, they were about to hit the boiling point.

The summer session schedule, which I had put together back in October, was very heavy in courses during the day—designed to attract traditional 18- to 22-year-old students. On the opening day of the summer session, we discovered we had almost double the number of students who normally attended CHE during the day. Every classroom was filled. The students quickly swamped the parking lot and filled up the fire lanes of the surrounding streets, anxious not to miss the opening class session to avoid being dropped. The neighboring tenants howled. Peter Oswald paid an emphatic visit to Les Birdsall and warned that Sunset would restrict access to the lot. Les turned for help to District Office and Bill Brown. Brown responded by threatening to slap an injunction on Sunset Development. Our landlords then evoked the original lease, which contained language limiting the number of parking spaces we were entitled to, a provision that had not been previously enforced. To limit access, Sunset brought in a security team that was stationed at each entrance to the lot and turned away students when the legal number was reached. Our students responded by aggressively asserting their God-given rights to park wherever they pleased. There was a report that one of them had tried to run down a security guard. The ensuing brouhaha was featured on the front page of the local newspaper, and for years to come, people in the San Ramon Valley talked about the “car fight at the Sunset corral.”

With the help of Tom Beckett at the District Office, we were able to reach a quick agreement with the United Parcel Service facility next door to

use some of its parking spaces for the rest of the session. I paid a visit to Peter Oswald's office, when I returned from leave, and apologized abjectly for the mess I had caused. The City of San Ramon was on heightened alert for parking problems; in fact, they required us to submit our class schedules for their approval every semester before we could proceed. This hyper-concern over parking impact actually had a beneficial effect on CHE. In our new location, we became much more creative about when we scheduled classes in order to avoid a recurrence. But when we began operations at 3150 Crow Canyon Place in late August 1991, Sunset Development made sure all the gates between their parking lots and the new CHE were securely locked.

The tumultuous six-year period CHE operated at One Annabel Lane was vital in establishing the core of a faculty, staff, and program that would go on to great success as DVC's permanent campus 20 years later. Most importantly, that baptism by fire instilled in us a sense of adventure and appreciation for innovation.

18

C H A P T E R



The Brentwood Center opened at 101-A Sand Creek Road in 2001.

Los Medanos College's Brentwood Center: Meeting the Higher Education Needs in Far East County

Following the success of the San Ramon outreach in the late 1990s, Los Medanos College (LMC) began a similar effort in Brentwood, a fast-growing city east of LMC's main campus in Pittsburg. LMC President Peter García (2003–) shares the background on the establishment of the Brentwood Center, bringing us to 2009 and the quest for a permanent home. Following García's introduction, we hear from Thais Kishi, who has headed the center since 1999, its second year of operation. As her account makes clear, the success of the operation has been the result of innovative approaches in organizing offerings and working in partnership with the city and local schools.

CREATING THE BRENTWOOD CENTER

Peter García

DURING THE TENURE OF LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE President Stanley Chin (1991–95) and Chancellor Bob Jensen (1991–95), LMC began considering an outreach center in Brentwood, primarily in response to the S.H. Cowell Foundation’s offer to donate a portion of its vast land holdings in far East County to the Contra Costa Community College District (District). This was part of the college’s planning and development agreements with the city and county as they contemplated bringing thousands of acres of development to this primarily rural area. Over the next decade, the Cowell plan was greatly reduced by decisions made by local government to limit growth and development through the passage of the Urban Limit Line. During those years, the location of the future college acreage changed a number of times, but it always remained an element of the plan.

In 1996, on one of President Raul Rodriguez’s early trips to Los Medanos College, he drove Vasco Road, the eastern portal to LMC’s service area, passing through Brentwood for the first time. He immediately saw that this was going to be a growth corridor for the college, and that Brentwood Center should not wait for the Cowell donation and development, but should precede it. After reaching an agreement with Charles “Chuck” Spence, the chancellor at the time, President Rodriguez began negotiating with the Brentwood Union School District for the purchase of the recently vacated Brentwood Elementary School site on Second Street. He soon realized that the primary competitors for the site were Liberty Union High School District (LUHSD) and the City of Brentwood, and he decided that a bidding war among three public entities in a city where the college wanted to be considered a good neighbor was not in the best interest of the community or the college.

Moving to the Next Stage

SOON AFTER LUHSD PURCHASED the site to become its alternative high school and adult education center, the district's superintendent, Dan Smith, and President Rodriguez reached an oral agreement to lease a wing of the building to the college for classes and services. A local LMC faculty member interested in the area, Laurie (Ojeda) Huffman, and this writer, then dean of economic development, were charged with writing a lease, furnishing and equipping the space, and scheduling classes and services to open a college center. For the next few years, the college operated its Brentwood Center with Laurie Huffman serving as its coordinator.

It soon became apparent that the needs of LUHSD and the growth of LMC's classes in Brentwood were incompatible, and LMC would need to find a new location. Brentwood City Manager Jon Elam approached me about a soon-to-be-vacated Lucky grocery store on Brentwood Boulevard near Sand Creek Road. Negotiations between the District and the city produced a long-term lease for 17,000 square feet of classroom and office space in the renovated building that also housed a small-business incubator and a high-tech conference room. The city provided the upfront cost of the college's tenant improvements and an innovative lease that was structured on the college's enrollment. The center quickly became a success. At the same time, the Cowell Foundation finally settled on a 30-acre donation to the District for LMC's future and permanent Brentwood Center. The college successfully argued before the Local Agency Formation Commission the need to bring the property into the Brentwood city limits, where it sits today at the southwest corner of the Highway 4 bypass and Marsh Creek Road.

In 2009, after an exhaustive search of local properties, the District began negotiating for the purchase of a new site. It was hoped that the Cowell Foundation would allow the trade or sale of its donation to make the new purchase possible.

THE GROWTH OF THE CENTER

Thais Kishi

I BEGAN MY CAREER WITH THE DISTRICT as the director of counseling services at Contra Costa College, and established the Disabled Student Program and the Career Center there, working under Leroy Mims. But in the aftermath of Proposition 13, I lost that position. I then transferred to LMC as a counselor, following the death of longtime counselor Gene Thomas. In 1998, while on sabbatical from LMC, I learned that the Brentwood Center needed a new coordinator. I was interviewed by phone, agreed to take the position, and was named coordinator in 1999.

New Center Opens in 2001

TWO YEARS LATER, IN 2001, the new Brentwood Center opened as part of the Brentwood Education and Technology Center, offering 42 course sections to 898 enrolled students. At its opening, the college's portion of the facility included 11 classrooms, a computer lab, and a multipurpose community room.

By 2003, Brentwood Center students could complete general education requirements for the associate in arts (AA) degree and for UC and state university transfer requirements. Among the occupational programs offered were administration of justice, business, child development, and fire sciences. In fall 2004, course offerings doubled to 86 sections, and as of 2008, the center had 140 sections, most of them in liberal arts.

In August 2006, the center submitted a needs study to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) for "education center status," the first step in gaining official recognition of plans for a permanent campus. It also made LMC eligible for additional state funding. In addition, the center's first faculty division in math was created. That same year, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders gathered to celebrate Brentwood Center's five-year anniversary.

Small Staff in the Beginning

INITIAL STAFFING FOR THE BRENTWOOD CENTER included a faculty coordinator with release time; part-time faculty assigned in computer science, Spanish, and English; and one admissions and records classified staff person. In fall 2005, the dean's position was filled, and in 2006, a Brentwood faculty division was established. This nondepartmental faculty group consists of six full-time faculty from math, English, and Spanish. Math instructors include Brendan Brown, Jill DeStefano, Peter Doob, and Lois Yamakoshi; Madeline Puccioni teaches English; and the center's original program coordinator, Laurie Huffman, teaches Spanish. A math faculty member serves as the chair with 10-percent release time.

In the current (2008–2009) year, part-time faculty number more than 75 individuals, including two full-time admissions and records clerks, and we hope to add a full-time counselor next semester. Our senior administrative assistant position has been reclassified as a satellite business service coordinator; this key position provides administrative services to a growing student population, meets the needs of faculty and staff, and deals with public information contacts.

The faculty positions at the center are assigned by the departments at the main campus. At first, many instructors were reluctant to drive out to the remote Brentwood site, but they soon grew to like it. They receive help from a dedicated staff who have had to develop special skills, because they must be more self-reliant than the staff at the main campus. Students also appreciate the opportunity to attend classes at the Brentwood Center, where they are made to feel special. We hold frequent celebrations for holidays, like St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo, and serve students refreshments around finals time. No serious incidents of student vandalism or parking problems have occurred at the center, an indication of how students feel

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about their experience in Brentwood. A visitor from the District Office once asked why everyone at the Brentwood Center is always smiling. I believe it is because we work hard to cultivate a positive atmosphere and a culture that celebrates achievement.

Because I want to make sure our students are treated with respect, I am here every day until the early evening, which allows me to see the full operation. Much of our instruction takes place in the evening, so it is important that people know I am on-site. When I am gone for a while and I come back, people often say, “We missed seeing you.” That seldom happened to me at the main campus.

Activities and Challenges

BRENTWOOD’S STUDENT SERVICES include counseling, financial aid, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), English as a second language (ESL) counseling, tutoring, and reading and writing assistance, which are assigned in cooperation with the main campus services. Assessment testing for math and English and math tutoring are coordinated by the Brentwood staff. We have organized several significant activities during the past few years, including the five-year anniversary party already mentioned and a campus orientation and tour for the counseling staff of the Liberty Union High School District. We also established the first student organization, the Rotaract Club of Brentwood, which was chartered in 2008 and is sponsored by Brentwood Rotary International. In addition, Brentwood Center Foundation has provided scholarships for Brentwood students.

The connection between the center and the community is emphasized in many activities. For example, Spanish teacher Laurie Huffman has taken her students to distribute food to migrant workers seeking jobs. The students were able to practice their Spanish, and the gesture made a positive impact within the community. Also, the LUHSD sends many of its students to the center for concurrent enrollment.

I keep in contact with others running similar operations through meetings of the Directors of Off-Campus Centers (DOCC), who face many of the same challenges and share successful strategies. San Joaquin Delta Col-

lege, for example, has opened a new center in Mountain Home, thanks to the efforts of its president, Raul Rodriquez, the same man who started the Brentwood Center.

Planning for New Growth

IN JANUARY 2008, three additional classrooms added 1,830 square feet to the Brentwood facility. This allowed us to move math classes into another space and to designate a math lab for student tutoring. A substantial increase in enrollment was achieved in fall 2008, with a total of 4,082 students.

Planning for a new facility was a major objective during the 2008–09 academic year. The process involved faculty and staff thinking seriously about what it is we do and where we want to go. College authorities are currently looking at several possible sites for a permanent facility. The location and the design of the facility will have great influence on what people do in the future and how they feel about it. One program I would like to add is child development that emphasizes bilingual training. Other programs will be determined by the needs of the far East County residents.

The greatest challenge I have faced during my decade at the Brentwood Center has been the reluctance of the main campus to hire new full-time faculty for the center. That unwillingness comes out of a concern that encouraging students at Brentwood could undermine LMC's classes. I believe that attracting more students to Brentwood will add positively to both the main campus and Brentwood. It is natural for people who have grown up with an institution to resist change. But if we all embrace growth and change, I know that both LMC and Brentwood will benefit.

During the fall 2008 semester, a study was conducted to find out why students chose the Brentwood Center, and the staff tallied 1,065 surveys. Among the factors most commonly cited were the size of the center, the ease of registration and acquisition of information, and the friendly and comfortable environment. What the students most often requested was a larger facility, a broader selection of classes, and more parking. These suggestions will guide staff at the Brentwood Center as we plan for a new, permanent campus.

19

CHAPTER



The Diablo Valley College Grade Change Matter

The upheaval surrounding the Superintendent Drummond McCunn controversy in 1962 generated enormous interest in the local and national media, as we see in the article by Beatrice Taines. Perhaps the only other event in the 60 years of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) to produce such media interest was the matter involving student employees at Diablo Valley College (DVC) changing their grades and those of other students. In both these cases, the extensive coverage and editorial commentary did not necessarily accurately reflect the issues in the controversy as seen from the campus. Nevertheless, the media's accounts have fixed the public's perception of what happened in relatively simplistic terms. The three authors of this account were all directly involved in differ-

ent aspects of the extensive investigation and prosecution of those involved. They show us the challenges District and college personnel faced in identifying the extent of the crime, protecting the innocent parties' privacy, amassing evidence, and helping the prosecution. At the same time, those involved had to deal with the knotty issues of the public's right to know and the political fallout from the controversy.

DR. HELEN BENJAMIN: INTRODUCING THE GRADE CHANGE MATTER

IN AUGUST 2005, under the leadership of Sheila Grilli, the Governing Board of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) selected this writer as its seventh permanent chancellor. The appointment occurred at a challenging time in the history of the District and on the heels of a series of dramatic events.

In August 2004, Chancellor Charles Spence (1996–2004) left the District. During the year between his termination and my hiring, an acting chancellor, Phyllis Gilliland, and then an interim chancellor, Dr. Lois Callahan, provided temporary leadership for the District. From February 2004 to April 2005, the District struggled through negotiations with both its unions, principally due to the deteriorating financial position in which the District found itself after a few years of poor budget management. Employees had not been granted a raise since September 2002. At the end of the negotiations, all employee groups received a salary decrease, either through furloughs or direct reductions in pay. In addition, for the first time, employees had to pay 6 percent toward the cost of their benefits. The District reserve was below the minimum suggested by the state. When the 2005–06 academic year opened, employee morale was low and the District was in serious financial straits. My primary task was to stabilize it with deliberate speed.

In fall 2005, the Governing Board approved strategic directions that focused on the immediate needs of the entire District: achieving enrollment growth; improving fiscal health; improving morale; and improving student learning and achievement.

It was at this moment—in many respects, the worst possible moment—that the grade change scandal surfaced.

A Possible Security Breach—January 2006

IN JANUARY 2006, when Diablo Valley College (DVC) and the District Office were first notified of a possible breach in the District’s student records system, neither had any idea of the depth and breadth of the fraud. Administrators moved expeditiously to get the facts of the case, immediately notifying the District Police Department, the District’s legal counsel (Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo), and shortly afterward, the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office.

Two investigations were conducted simultaneously: an administrative one by the District auditor, Judy Vroman, and a criminal one by the District Police Department investigator, Ryan Huddleston. As the investigations proceeded over days, weeks, and then months, it was clear serious fraud had been committed and that *some* students who had worked in the Admissions and Records Office at DVC had successfully penetrated the District’s student records system. A small group of students had established a “business” that exchanged grades for cash. Two other students appeared to have acted independently of that group and of each other, changing grades for themselves and/or others.

Three changes in leadership at the college in the first two years of the investigation and related events added to the difficulty of managing the situation. As described elsewhere, embattled DVC President Mark Edelstein, who served as president for 10 years, retired in August 2006. Longtime

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student services leader and DVC Vice President Diane Scott-Summers, a contributor to this essay, served as interim president through August 2007, at which time Judy Walters became permanent president.

Not since the stormy years experienced under the leadership of Drummond McCunn, the District's first superintendent, were the college and the District challenged with such a controversial and public issue as the grade change matter. The Governing Board members stood firm in their resolve to have the matter investigated fully. They realized there was a great deal to balance: the right of the public to know, the responsibility of the District to protect the rights of those involved in the issue, and the need to conduct the investigation with integrity. In the end, how these fraudulent actions were perpetrated was understood both in the District and statewide, and systems were put into place to prevent a recurrence in the future.

Local radio and television stations camped out at the college in Pleasant Hill and the courthouse in Martinez to report any breaking news. This case of computer fraud was the first of its kind in Contra Costa County, and the district attorney wanted to ensure that the violators were prosecuted to the full extent of the law. College and District Office personnel and members of the District Attorney's Office worked diligently on the case. The account that follows, written by the two District administrators closest to the events as they occurred, presents the facts of the case objectively.

JUDY VROMAN AND DR. DIANE SCOTT-SUMMERS: THE DETAILS

Initial Discovery—January/February 2006

IN LATE JANUARY 2006, DVC Dean of Student Life Bill Oye received an anonymous telephone message that students were paying to have their grades changed. He communicated the contents of the message to Director of Admissions and Records Gary Fincher. A short time later, a student met with an instructor and claimed that other students were paying to have

their grades changed. This was reported to Dean Dennis Smith. Checking specific student names and courses, the college administration was able to verify that grades were changed without authorization. In addition, Dean Rachel Westlake notified instructor Michael Whitaker about a missing grade for a fall 2005 math course. When Whitaker examined the roster, he discovered a discrepancy for Erick Martinez: the student should have been dropped but instead had been given an A. Westlake notified the Admissions and Records Office and provided staff with the supporting documentation.

On February 15, 2006, Gene Huff, the interim vice chancellor, human resources, received a copy of an e-mail from Dennis Smith containing allegations of unauthorized grade changes for cash. Huff contacted Kim Christiana, senior applications analyst, and asked her to begin reviewing the database for grade changes. He also contacted Judy Vroman, one of the authors of this essay and manager of audit services, who met with Huff, discussed the allegations, and contacted Gary Fincher of admissions and records. President Mark Edelstein and Vice President Scott-Summers, the second author of this essay, were informed of the unfolding events.

Fincher came to the District Office with a copy of a grade roster for instructor Michael Whitaker's Fall 2005 Math 182 course. The WebAdvisor grade roster was printed on December 14, 2005, and it showed Erick Martinez with no grade and a second student, also with the surname Martinez, with a D. However, a grade roster printed on February 9, 2006, showed Erick Martinez with an A and the second Martinez with no grade. Erick Martinez was an hourly employee in the DVC Admissions and Records Office. At the direction of Fincher, Linda McEwen, lead admissions and records assistant, contacted Kim Christiana and verified that Erick Martinez was listed as the change operator for his own grade change.

Christiana then forwarded a spreadsheet to Huff containing courses from 1999 summer to 2004 summer with grade changes from January 1, 2005. Christiana highlighted in yellow any changes that had the same change operator changing several grades for the same student. The spreadsheet listed Erick Martinez as the change operator for 10 of his own grades.

Huff and Vroman then contacted instructor Michael Whitaker by phone about the appearance of Erick Martinez on the roster. Whitaker stated that he had tried to drop Erick Martinez's name several times, but it kept reappearing on his roster, even though Whitaker knew that he had not entered a grade for him.

After speaking with Whitaker, Huff and Vroman went to the DVC Admissions and Records Office to interview Erick Martinez. Martinez stated that he earned A's and B's in all his courses, but he could not explain why all of the grades were now A's, nor how the grades had been changed under his own log-in and password. He repeatedly denied changing his own grades. At the conclusion of the interview, admissions and records management assisted Martinez with closing out his session, and he was asked to leave and not return to the office.

Police Services Notified Immediately—February 2006

BECAUSE THE DISCOVERY INVOLVED potential criminal activity, Lt. Esther Skeen of Police Services was notified on February 16, 2006. Copies of the documentation that had been gathered, interview reports, and potential leads were handed over to Police Services on February 17, 2006. The case was assigned to the District's new detective, Ryan Huddleston. Through interviews, Huddleston learned early on that admissions and records hourly employee Jeremy Tato was a suspect in the cash-for-grades scheme. Tato was interviewed, and admissions and records notified him that he was not to return to work.

Security Breach Closed—February/March 2006

CHANCELLOR HELEN BENJAMIN immediately appointed a task force comprised of Mojdeh Mehdizadeh, vice chancellor, information technology; Ted Wieden, special assistant to the chancellor; Gary Fincher; Kim Christina; and Judy Vroman to review the security issues identified in the initial investigation. The task force met from February 2006 to June 2006.

It found that more than 100 individuals had access to two grade screens; however, most of these employees were counselors and counseling staff. Access to these screens was restricted immediately to 11 employees Districtwide. This number was later reduced to seven college staff and two District administrators. In addition, Mehdizadeh consulted with other college districts using Datatel (which manufactures WebAdvisor) to determine whether any other known entrances to the grade-change system existed. No other methods or screens were identified.

Not one of the unauthorized grade changes was made by employees outside of the Admissions and Records Office. All of the identified unauthorized grade changes were made by part-time, hourly admissions and records employees who were also students.

New Internal Control Procedures Developed, Audited, and Refined—June 2006 to June 2008

BY JUNE 2006, the District had developed a report for admissions and records directors that gave them the ability to review all grade changes. Directors were required to run the report monthly and review it for any unusual transactions. The District's internal auditor reviewed these reports during summer 2007 and made recommendations to strengthen and improve the written procedures for conducting the reviews. These monthly reports were subsequently reviewed again in spring 2008 by Rose Investigations, an outside, private investigation firm, and further recommendations for improvements were made.

The Decision to Maintain Confidentiality vs. Public Disclosure—Spring 2006

THERE WAS MUCH DISCUSSION early on about whether to make the investigation public or maintain confidentiality. Points were made on all sides, and a public relations consultant was brought in to assist the college in the first weeks of the discovery. His recommendation was to make the case public early on.

But some District personnel close to the investigation wanted to maintain confidentiality, fearing that public knowledge would alert potential suspects and give them the opportunity to destroy or tamper with paper or electronic evidence or influence witnesses. In addition, the District Attorney's Office instructed the District not to release or make public any details regarding the case. The advice of District legal counsel was sought and a decision was made to maintain confidentiality, an action that went against the media relations consultant's advice.

Phase I Audit Process: March 2006–June 2007

ABOUT MID-MARCH 2006, Judy Vroman began working with Kim Christiana to extract grade changes from the database. The first data report produced over 37,000 records for the period of 1999 through March 2006. The report was sorted and reviewed manually. Criteria used to select grade changes for further investigation included the following:

1. The grade change was made for a course that ended more than one year from the date of the change. (*Note:* Students requesting grade changes must petition within one year of the grade issuance.)
2. The new grade was a substantial improvement over the original grade.
3. The grade change was made by a suspicious operator. (By this time, Police Services had identified most of the main suspects in the case; however, not all suspicious activity was limited to untrustworthy change operators.)
4. The student had several grade changes.
5. The student had several grade changes on or about the same time and/or date.

This initial list of questionable grade changes for 181 students was sent to the Admissions and Records Office, with a request to search for and provide the appropriate grade change authorization form. A grade change

authorization form was found for the majority of the changes. For the remaining changes, additional supporting documentation, such as opening rosters, section rosters, pre-final rosters, grade rosters, and drop records, were requested and analyzed. Based on this review, a determination was made about whether the grades still appeared to be unauthorized.

In November 2006, grade verification forms were sent to 260 instructors, asking them to verify 519 changes to 410 grades for 84 students. The instructors were also asked to provide any available supporting documentation that validated the true grade for the student. The majority of instructors were able to respond to the request. The completed verification forms and the supporting documentation were analyzed to determine whether the grade changes were unauthorized. There were 20 students and 40 grade changes cleared during this stage of the process, leaving a total of 64 students with 469 unauthorized changes to 370 grades. The reason there were more changes than grades was because some grades were changed more than once.

Any of the 64 students who were still enrolled were asked to participate in administrative interviews. Former students and students who were enrolled in spring 2007 but who were no longer attending DVC were sent certified letters in April and May 2007 about the unauthorized grade changes. Some students responded to the request for an interview, some did not, and some students could not be reached because of invalid or out-of-date addresses.

Newspaper Break—January 2007

IN JANUARY 2007, the chancellor received a phone call from a *Contra Costa Times (CCT)* reporter who said he had been given information that grades had been exchanged at DVC for “sex, drugs, and cash.” The chancellor verified that an investigation was under way that involved grades being exchanged for cash but not for sex or drugs. The following press release was issued by the college.

Investigation of Unauthorized Grade Changes at Diablo Valley College

Pleasant Hill, California – January 12, 2007 – Administrators at Diablo Valley College announced an ongoing investigation into allegations of unauthorized changing of student grades. District police are investigating this matter, and suspects have been identified. Once the investigation has been completed, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, and, if called for, the case will be referred to the District Attorney's Office.

The allegations of unauthorized grade changes came to the attention of the college during the Spring 2006 semester. Additional safeguards were instituted immediately to strengthen the security of existing systems and protocols. "Since that time, the college has been conducting a detailed and thorough audit and will ensure that every grade change that was not warranted is identified and corrected," said Interim President, Dr. Diane Scott-Summers.

Not surprisingly, this set off a media frenzy. However, the District had had a full year, from January 2006 to January 2007, to conduct the investigation without interference. That respite from public scrutiny led to a thorough investigation, resulting in the identification, arrest, and conviction of the perpetrators of the fraud.

The *CCT* took on the story with great fervor and took an editorial position against the college and the District for their handling of the issue. Although much of the reporting was balanced, some of the headlines were false and particularly damaging, including the following.

- **Transcript scandal at DVC grows**—"Officials say altering of records started sooner than first reported, *may have included sex-for-grades deals*" (emphasis added), *Contra Costa Times*, front page, June 12, 2007

After the District police, college and District personnel, and Audit Services spent thousands of hours on the investigation, including conducting many interviews of students and staff, no evidence was ever found to support the sex-for-grades allegation.

- **DVC could lose accreditation**—"Cash-for-grades scandal prompts organization to ask college district to answer questions about plot," *Contra Costa Times*, front page, June 15, 2007

The District/college staff is confident that the five remaining recommendations [described below] were addressed in the August 2008 report, and

this was verbally affirmed in the September 2008 Accreditation Commission visit to the college.

Clearly, the incident brought considerable negative attention to the college, placing it in a defensive posture. In response to the damaging press reports and to address concerns, Diane Scott-Summers and Helen Benjamin published a message to the community in the *Contra Costa Times* on June 24, 2007, describing the case and the steps taken to address it. On July 24, 2007, Governing Board President Jo Ann Cookman and Vice President Tomi Van de Brooke sent a letter to the community with a copy of the published message to community members.

Interestingly, enrollment did not suffer. From all indications, confidence in the college was not diminished. When personnel at colleges to which many DVC students transfer were asked if the “unauthorized grade issue” had caused them to treat DVC students’ applications any differently than other transfer students’ applications, the response was a resounding “no.” Scott-Summers sent letters explaining the details of the fraud and corrected transcripts to campuses of the University of California, California State University, California Community College System, and to other colleges and universities to which DVC students routinely transfer.

On July 24, 2007, Helen Benjamin, Diane Scott-Summers, and Judy Vroman met with two *Contra Costa Times* editors and the reporter covering the story. The face-to-face meeting marked a turning point in the tone of subsequent articles. The articles certainly continued to hold the administration accountable for the scandal, but they did not seem to carry the same negative tone. Also, the articles began to focus on the prosecution of those involved in the fraud.

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Throughout this time, Diane Scott-Summers communicated with college personnel and students about the media reports through regular, timely, informative e-mails and open discussions, and the chancellor sent periodic updates to the District community.

Vroman Report to the Governing Board—May 2007

IN MAY 2007, Judy Vroman gave the first public presentation by District Audit to the Governing Board on the status of the District's administrative investigation, detailing the initial allegations, the audit process, and the current status of the case. The presentation detailed how 64 students were notified concerning 469 unauthorized changes to 370 grades, and how current students were asked to participate in administrative interviews and former students were asked to schedule interviews with the administration. It was noted, too, that as a result of the interviews or of other information that had been gathered, eight of the 64 students might be cleared.

Grade changes initiated from DVC for eight students in 18 courses at Los Medanos College (LMC) appeared in the report, as well. The Governing Board was also notified about the proposed disciplinary action and grade-correction process.

Grade Change Committee—June/July 2007

ON JUNE 27, 2007, a committee made up of Dan Martin, interim vice president, student services; Cheryll LeMay, interim dean, enrollment management; Bill Oye, dean of student life; and Scott MacDougal, vice president of the Faculty Senate, met to determine the disposition for each of the 64 students. Judy Vroman presented each student's file to the committee, and Diane Scott-Summers monitored the proceedings. The committee met on June 27 and June 28 for two full days and completed the committee process on the morning of July 2. Ten students were cleared during this process. On July 3, Detective Huddleston was notified of the students who were cleared and the grade changes or original grade entries that were cleared. This left

54 students with unauthorized changes to 346 grades. Because they had not been cleared, these students were suspended from the District for time periods ranging from one to three years, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Students Charged—July and November 2007

DURING JULY 2007, 34 students were charged by the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office. The District's Police Services, in coordination with other local law enforcement agencies, arrested a number of students in the initial sweep. In November 2007, charges were filed against 15 additional students involved in the case.

Vroman Report to the Governing Board—July 2007

THE GOVERNING BOARD was again briefed on the status of the case by Judy Vroman, who began by emphasizing the improvements that had been made to internal controls: computer access had been restricted; monthly grade change reports were now being run and reviewed; the monthly grade change reports and the process had been reviewed by internal audit; new controls had been recommended; and an independent auditor would be reviewing the new controls.

An update on the status of the Los Medanos College case was presented. The LMC Grade Change Review Committee would be meeting on August 1, 2007, at which time it would determine the disposition of 18 grade changes for eight students.

The report also disclosed the recent discovery of a Contra Costa College employee who had made unauthorized grade changes to her own grades. The employee was put on leave pending the completion of the investigation. The incident was uncovered through both newly established controls and stepped up internal audits.

The results of the DVC Grade Change Committee meetings held at the end of June and the first part of July were reviewed once again: of the 64

students with changes to 370 grades, 10 students with 24 grade changes were cleared, leaving 54 students with unauthorized changes to 346 grades.

Diane Scott-Summers Reports to the Governing Board—July 2007

IN A JULY 2007 Board report, Diane Scott-Summers reviewed the actions taken to close the security breach, improve internal controls, and investigate the incident. In addition, she outlined the steps taken to correct the unauthorized grades and to notify both the affected students and the educational institutions or other operations that received inaccurate transcripts.

1. Unauthorized grades were converted to the original grades assigned by the instructors and a note was placed on the transcript next to each unauthorized grade, indicating that it had been corrected.
2. Letters were sent to the students affected, notifying them of the proposed disciplinary actions, including possible suspension. Each student was given due process and informed of his or her right to an administrative appeal hearing.
3. Letters indicating the above actions had been taken were sent to each student involved, along with a copy of his or her corrected transcript.
4. Letters were sent to all colleges and other institutions that received a falsified transcript. The letter indicated that some grades were unauthorized and a corrected transcript was enclosed.
5. Earned degrees, certificates of achievement, and general education certifications were rescinded in cases where unauthorized grades were used to secure them.
6. All the students involved were blocked from enrollment in the District until their suspension had been concluded and they had met with the dean of student life.
7. Letters indicating the college had completed its process and that compromised transcripts had been corrected and forwarded to affected institutions were sent to the presidents of the campuses of the University of

California, California State University, and the California Community College System; to the presidents of the private colleges that are most popular with DVC students; and to local high school principals.

Accreditation—May 2007 to January 2009

ON MAY 8, 2007, Diane Scott-Summers received a letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges asking a number of questions about the unauthorized grade change issue. The interim president was asked to describe the breach in institutional integrity brought about by the unauthorized grade changes, provide specific details of the investigation, and explain what actions the college had taken as a result of its findings. The responses to the questions were sent to the commission on May 31, 2007, as requested. The involvement of the commission was a surprise to the college and the District. When the unauthorized grade issue was brought to the attention of the commission, it cited a recommendation from a 2003 accreditation visit as the basis for the inquiry and follow-up.

Visit 1: The accrediting commission scheduled a “special visit” to the college on July 30, 2007. The college provided hundreds of pages of documentation and worked very hard to respond to the inquiry and to the concerns of the commission. The visiting team members requested more information and that more action be taken to resolve the issues that they believed still needed to be addressed. The commission made nine recommendations to the college and requested another report and another visit.

Visit 2: The second special visit was scheduled for April 4, 2008, with another team and another list of questions. Again, several hundred pages of documentation were provided to this new team.

Dr. Judy Walters, the new, permanent DVC president, submitted the report to the commission on March 15, 2008, addressing the nine recommendations resulting from the July 30 visit. A follow-up team visited the college on April 4, 2008, as planned, to evaluate progress. The team acknowledged that the college had addressed four of the nine recommen-

dations, only partially addressed three, and had not responded to two. On June 30, 2008, the commission issued a “warning” and asked the college to correct the five remaining deficiencies and submit a report by August 30, 2008.

Visit 3: The commission’s third special visit was scheduled for September 19, 2008. In its January 2009 meeting, the commission accepted the special report submitted by the college in August that was then validated by the visiting team in September. The commission concluded that the “issues of grade integrity and security have been satisfactorily resolved.”

The preparation for the accreditation visits and the months of work that were required to address the unauthorized grade issues were time-consuming, detailed, stressful, and often frustrating. Among the most difficult aspects of the process were the constant accusations from both the press and the accreditation teams that the college was not taking the issue “seriously,” which could not have been further from the truth. Everyone who worked to understand and correct the breach and ensure the future integrity of students’ grades was genuinely serious, personally and professionally committed to the task, and sincerely determined to prohibit the recurrence of such fraud.

Hayashi Hearing—September 2007

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MARY HAYASHI, chair of the Select Committee on Community Colleges, convened a public hearing on the DVC grade change matter on September 25, 2007, in Pleasant Hill, California. The agenda included invited speakers Diane Scott-Summers, DVC interim president; Helen Benjamin, chancellor; Gary Fincher, former DVC admissions and records director; and a representative from the state chancellor’s office. Assemblymember Hayashi was the only member of the committee in attendance.

Grade Change Task Force (Solutions Task Force)— October 2007 to January 2008

IN OCTOBER 2007, Chancellor Benjamin appointed a Districtwide task force to strengthen grade change policies and procedures in order to make the system more secure. Appointed members included employees of the three campuses and the District Office.

The charge was to ensure the integrity of processes and procedures regarding grade changes. The committee was directed to:

- identify, develop, and implement new grade change policies and procedures;
- work continually with the District's external auditor in developing, reviewing, and revising, if necessary, internal control procedures; and
- continue administrative review of data integrity and help conduct debrief sessions, where necessary.

The committee was to complete its work by December 2007 and report back to the chancellor and her cabinet, which it did.

Several recommendations were made and implemented, which included revision of some policies and procedures, making grades dating to 2000 available to faculty so they could check the accuracy of previously posted grades, and the distribution of vital information to faculty on the importance of turning grades in on time. The recommendations were discussed in several college and District constituency-based committees and were implemented.

The vice presidents and vice chancellor, educational programs and services, met regularly to ensure continual attention to Districtwide issues related to policies and procedures in student services and instruction, including grading issues. Upon completion of the work of the Solutions Task Force to strengthen grade change policies and procedures, the Chancellor's Cabinet, Faculty Senate Coordinating Councils, student services managers, vice presidents, and vice chancellors worked together to review and revisit existing policies and procedures for recording grade changes. Appropriate

changes were made to current policies and procedures and new ones were created to strengthen grade change practices.

Debriefing Interviews—October 2007

IN OCTOBER 2007, Chancellor Benjamin, along with Judy Vroman, met with several individuals who first became aware of the questionable grade changes. The purpose was to obtain an understanding of how the information was brought forth and to share it with managers Districtwide as part of the case debriefing.

Management and Staff Training—January 2008

IN JANUARY 2008, a Districtwide management meeting was held that addressed, among other important topics, the grade change matter, including lessons learned. Vroman covered four key points related to the case: hiring of staff; evaluating the level of work assigned, including security access; setting the ethical tone in a department; and recognizing and reporting fraud's red flags. Police Chief Gibson and Detective Ryan Huddleston provided general information about the case and answered questions. Diane Scott-Summers discussed the steps taken by the college and the impact of the matter on the college.

In addition, in February and March 2008, Vroman and Chief Gibson provided training for admissions and records, financial aid, and Cashier's Office staff on computer security, compliance with policies and procedures, and the reporting of dishonest or unethical behavior.

Phase II—August 2007 to November 2008

DURING AUGUST 2007, a decision was made to continue the examination of grade change records to determine whether any other unauthorized grade changes could be identified. Extensive data review, along with interviews

(in September 2007 and January 2008) of two of the individuals involved in the unauthorized grade changes, were helpful in identifying a small group of additional potential unauthorized grade changes. Rose Investigations, along with Judy Vroman, conducted a review similar to that of Phase I. Phase II was completed in November 2008.

A DVC Grade Change Committee was convened on November 12, 2008, to determine the disposition of 22 student files with 55 changes to 41 grades. The committee was composed of John Baker, interim vice president of student services; John Mullen, interim dean of outreach, enrollment management and matriculation; Ileana Dorn, director of admissions and records; and Laurie Lema, Faculty Senate president. The evidence in each case was presented by Lisa Rose of Rose Investigations. President Judy Walters and Judy Vroman were observers.

At the conclusion of the committee hearing, 19 students were found to have 49 unauthorized changes to 38 grades. Following the same process established in Phase I, any degrees issued were reevaluated, transcripts were corrected, students were notified, and institutions that received erroneous transcripts were sent corrected ones. Detective Ryan Huddleston was notified of the results.

Legal Outcomes

ALL THREE OF THE MAIN PERPETRATORS of the cash-for-grades scheme (Liberato “Rocky” Servo, Julian Revilleza, and Jeremy Tato) received felony convictions. One hourly employee–student (Erick Martinez), tried for changing his own grades and a few grades for other students, was found not guilty. A second hourly employee (Ronald Nixon), who had numerous unauthorized grade changes to his own grades, pled guilty to a misdemeanor.

The remaining students who were charged had received unauthorized grade changes. Several of these students cooperated with the District’s internal auditor, the District’s detective, and the Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office, and they were convicted on lesser charges. As of mid-2009, the district attorney is still prosecuting the remainder of these cases.

Assemblymember Hayashi and AB 1754— January to September 2008

ON JANUARY 7, 2008, Assemblymember Mary Hayashi introduced a bill to require the state community college chancellor to review the grade change policies of at least six community colleges—two each from northern, central, and southwestern community college districts—and to determine the best practices with respect to these policies. In addition, the bill required the state chancellor to report his or her findings and conclusions to the governor and the chairpersons of designated legislative policy committees no later than June 1, 2010.

On June 18, 2008, the bill was amended to require the chancellor to distribute a preexisting model grade change policy, updated in 2008, to each community college district. It also directed the legislature to encourage community college districts to establish grade change policies and procedures that applied the standards in the model policy.

The bill was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger in September 2008, with the following message: “I am returning Assembly Bill 1754 without my signature. Nothing under current law prohibits the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to distribute a pre-existing model grade changing policy to each community college district, even without legislative mandate. Therefore, this bill is unnecessary. For this reason, I am unable to sign this bill.”

EPILOGUE BY DIANE SCOTT-SUMMERS: WHY DID THEY DO IT?

WHEN THE GRADE CHANGE INCIDENT SURFACED, I could not help but wonder what could be going on in the minds of students who would participate in such an activity. I had served in a variety of student services positions at DVC for more than 30 years and had never experienced anything similar. What motivated them to pay to have their grades changed? Many of the students who had their grades altered ille-

gally were interviewed. Their responses to the questions of the interviewers give some insight into their motivations, how the crime was committed, and into their character.

Although a few of the students maintained that they did not know how their grades were changed, and also insisted they were not responsible, many admitted their culpability. They said they had gotten involved to improve their grade point average so they could get into a particular college. Many of these students were subsequently dismissed or had their degrees rescinded. One student who was trying to finish school had trouble balancing classes and work. Another reported that he was afraid a single C might keep him out of the university. A group of students said they had already been accepted for transfer when they had their grades changed; nevertheless, their plans were endangered because their academic standing had been based on the grades they had reported. One student changed his own grades and the grades of his girlfriend because he viewed the action as a shortcut. Others maintained that when they discovered their altered grades, they thought they were a bureaucratic mistake and saw no need to report them. A few even stated they thought they were a gift.

Some students' grades were changed because they were friends with people who worked in the Admissions and Records Office. Most of the others paid, at least one as much as \$4,000. One student was helped with Extended Opportunity Programs & Services and financial aid as a result of a doctored grade and was forced to repay the money received. Almost all the students expressed surprise at the legal challenges they faced for fraud. They said that what they had done was just like copying a paper

Although a few of the students maintained that they did not know how their grades were changed, and also insisted they were not responsible, many admitted their culpability. They said they had gotten involved to improve their grade point average so they could get into a particular college. . . .

from another student and not a criminal act. They were embarrassed and humiliated when confronted by the police and when their names were published in the newspapers.

Though I am now retired, when I think of this incident, it still sends a visceral rush through my body because of the impact that it had on the reputation of the college and the thousands of students who value, respect, and appreciate the education they receive at Diablo Valley College. I find solace in the ability of DVC to survive through difficult times, and this incident is no exception.

PART IV

Whose Colleges Are These?



Diablo Valley College students march through Pleasant Hill
in an antiwar protest in 1969.

20

C H A P T E R



Authors include former faculty members
Nannette Finley-Hancock (at left) and Baji Majette Daniels.

Equity, Access, and Inclusion: The African American Experience at Contra Costa College

At no other campus in the Contra Costa Community College District (District) did the dramatic demographic shifts of the last 60 years reveal themselves and challenge the college identity as thoroughly as at Contra Costa College (CCC). In the aftermath of the Second World War, West County was home to thousands of new residents who had flocked to the wartime industries and now had to forge new communities. The college became a focal point for this effort.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke at the college in 1962. Following his assassination in 1968, students and staff throughout the District sought to make his birthday a holiday. That struggle would take a decade to resolve and would lead to the election of the first African American to the Gov-

erning Board, Lloyd Farr. He had been a member of the Black Student Union, which had started the push back in 1970.

Equity in hiring, promotion, and policies led to greater access for students. Both were won through organization and political effort. Finally, in many small ways, the process of inclusion began to evolve and is ongoing. Here are the voices of six members of that generation that led the fight and helped achieve the dream at Contra Costa College. Notice how many times these trailblazers were the “first” in some way.

A SECOND GENERATION ON CAMPUS

Joan Tucker

Joan L. Tucker was a student at Contra Costa College when it was at its first location in the Richmond shipyards. Later she graduated and began a 26-year career there. It was a career of “firsts.”

I CAME TO CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE when it was called “West Campus” and was located in the old Kaiser shipyard buildings. My mother, Agnes Clements, then known as Agnes Owens, was the first African American woman hired in the maintenance area. Her official job title was “matron.” The students at that time came from Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. The campus was young, and the students, faculty, and staff were very enthusiastic. We had the first African American faculty member, an English instructor named Bertram Lewis.

I returned to CCC in 1971 to study library technology. My mother was still working at the college and it was fun being on campus with her. In 1972 I received a certificate of achievement and in 1973 was hired, under the Affirmative Action Program, as a library assistant—the first African American woman in that position. A little later the first African American man, Jim Talps, was hired as a librarian. He was a committed activist in support of the Black Studies Department.

In 1972 the Black Student Union (in which my husband was active) requested that the District Governing Board declare the birthdays of Mar-

tin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X school holidays. The request, the first of many, was denied.

When Proposition 13 was passed, some of the Library staff had their hours reduced; for 18 months I was demoted. Then, sometime in the late 1980s, the Library went through some physical transitions. We had to make room in the back of the Library for a language lab. When the rug was removed, we discovered asbestos underneath. Hazmat was called in. Some of the staff became sick and were given time off. In the process of renovation, the book stacks had to be moved from the mezzanine to the main floor—not an easy task.

I had my own health challenges when I had to have a liver transplant in 1991. I almost ran out of sick leave. My colleague, Barbara Allcox, arranged with the District to allow other college staff members to donate their individual sick leave to me so I would not lose my pay—another first at Contra Costa College. I returned after 18 months and retired in 1999. The college will always be special to me and part of my life that I'll never forget.

CHANGES FOR THE BETTER

Evelyn Patterson

Evelyn Patterson recounts some of the key struggles that faculty, staff, and students faced during her days at Contra Costa. She also celebrates the growth she witnessed. She was the sister of Reverend Lloyd Farr, the Governing Board member whose election is described here.

WORKED AT CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE for 24 years in a variety of classified positions, including as a secretary in counseling and job placement. In 1996 I retired after having witnessed many changes at the college. In the early 1970s, the college faced major challenges in equity and diversity. When I first went to work there, we had a very active Black Student Union (BSU) and Associated Students Union, as well as committed black faculty and classified staff.

The BSU protested grading discrimination affecting black students in nursing, and discrimination in not granting tenure to black faculty mem-

bers. The organization lobbied for changes in policies and also sought to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a holiday in the District. That recognition was a long time coming. Black students, faculty, and staff would stage walkouts to protest the Board's refusal to act. When the students mounted a picket line in the late 1960s, they were joined by English instructor William "Toby" Lawson.

Other black faculty protesters included Fritz Allen, Charles Allums, Wayne Daniels, Jim Talps, and, from Diablo Valley College, William Hutchins, Jim King, Chuck Risby, and Virgil Woolbright. My brother, Reverend Lloyd Farr, was the president of the BSU at that time and active with others, including O.T. Anderson, Earnest Pontiflet, Herbert Scruggs, and Jesse Sloan. Farr was told that if he didn't like what the Governing Board was doing, he should run for the Board. He did, and was elected in 1973! He was the youngest person ever elected to the Board and the first black man. He served as president on several occasions.

Finally, on January 10, 1979, the Governing Board approved a District holiday to honor Martin Luther King. Appropriately, my brother cast the final vote.

Today, so many changes have taken place for the better. We have a black man, McKinley Williams, as president of Contra Costa College; a black woman, Dr. Helen Benjamin, as chancellor of the District; and another black man, Dr. Tony Gordon, on the Governing Board.

ESTABLISHING THE PARAMEDICAL OCCUPATIONS PROGRAM

Nannette-Finley Hancock

Nannette Finley-Hancock taught at Contra Costa for 28 years, establishing new programs and serving in a number of important positions. She had the opportunity to see her children take advantage of the educational opportunities at the college.

DR. LEROY MIMS, then director of Contra Costa College's Special Programs, recruited me from UC Berkeley in 1970, and urged me to apply at Contra Costa. The day I went in for an interview, students were demonstrating to hire more African American faculty. President Dr. Bob Wynne and Dean of Instruction Marge Bates hired me to begin that fall. That was also the time when the Black Studies Program was born out of the struggle that saw the black students and staff uniting to exert pressure on the administration.

I started the Paramedical Occupations Program that was designed to train students to provide health services previously performed by registered nurses and licensed vocational nurses. It started with 10 students, but within one year, through word of mouth, it grew to 250 students. The program later became the Medical Assisting Program.

I established the annual pinning ceremony for the program, the first of which was held in May 1972 at St. Cornelius Catholic Church in Richmond. This was a special experience and provided recognition for students completing the program, in addition to the college commencement exercises. As a new faculty member, I was very active in the campaign to make Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a District holiday, long before it became a state or national issue. It was a hard-won victory that did not come until January 1979.

I fondly remember my tenure as president of the Academic Senate at CCC. Later I served as the president of the California Teachers Association, an important political position in a statewide organization. During that time, CCC adopted the division structure with division chairs initially appointed and later elected. It was a time of great change in the structure of the school.

As a new faculty member, I was very active in the campaign to make Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a District holiday, long before it became a state or national issue. It was a hard-won victory that did not come until January 1979.
—Nannette Finley-Hancock

I had the pleasure of witnessing the building of the Performing Arts Center, the Applied Arts Building, and the Health Science Building, after having participated in the design plans.

I attended all the basketball games where my son, Frank Hancock, III, played for Coach Edward Greene. We have remained good friends with Coach Greene, who continues to make a positive impact on my son's life. My daughter, Cheryl Hancock, completed the Medical Assisting Program with her mother as a teacher. She loved the experience!

I retired in 1998 and now work three days a week in my private practice, Paradise Cove Psychology Services, Inc., as a licensed marriage therapist.

SHORTHAND DICTATION AT 110 WORDS A MINUTE

Dianne McClain

Dianne McClain came to Contra Costa College by a rather circuitous route. In addition to working in the Library, she graduated as a student after she went to work.

WAS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN SINGLE PARENT who attended and graduated from Richmond High School in 1958. I was the first African American stenographer hired at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard and was something of a novelty during my five-year tenure. I had unusual typing and shorthand skills, typing 95 words a minute and taking shorthand dictation at 110 words a minute. In that job I took shorthand notes at, and kept records of, data for all personnel hearings. I loved my job, and it enriched my language skills and knowledge of the military personnel whom I encountered.

I later went to work as an administrative assistant/secretary at North Richmond's Neighborhood House for about 17 years. I have lived in the same house in Parchester Village ever since.

In July 1977, I went to work at CCC as the first African American library secretary. I was selected from a field of 13 applicants, and would work with a variety of staff over the next 26 years. In addition to assisting in the processing of all new and donated books, I worked in the media lab.

One of the most exciting moments for me at CCC was to graduate with honors in English in 1978. Along with more than 20 others, I received a Kennedy-King Memorial Scholarship.

Contra Costa offered me and my two children many benefits and an invaluable and diversified experience. I was able to help other students receive awards and scholarships through various programs and projects, and I made many valued friendships. On numerous occasions, I was selected to represent the classified staff on various committees. When I retired from the college, I received a number of commendations, awards, and other recognition.

This anecdote sums up my experience at CCC: In my final years at the college, I became ill and was running out of sick leave. Someone sent out a memorandum, just as they had done earlier for Joan Tucker, asking for people to donate their leave for me. So many people donated that I received well over 400 hours—so many, in fact, that it far exceeded what I needed. I retired with many hours remaining in my leave allotment. It was an overwhelming way to leave my friends and co-workers. I could not adequately thank all who graciously donated for me.

“THAT’S ALL RIGHT, BROTHER!”

Jim Lacy

Jim Lacy came to Contra Costa College, not intending to stay. He ended up teaching history and political science for 30 years. His wonderful account of his first day of teaching is one that many teachers can relate to from personal experience.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE in the fall of 1970, my intention was to teach for no more than three years. After that, the plan was to return to graduate school for my doctorate. I wanted to assimilate and digest the intellectually taxing concepts and theories I had been learning in the political science graduate school at UC Berkeley. A dear friend, Don Hopkins (also in political science), said during one of our get-togethers, “The best way to learn is to teach.”

By the fall of 1970, I felt that I was far enough along in graduate school that I could handle both my graduate school classes and a full-time teaching load. I wanted to test Don's notion. Some people were able to do well in graduate school and teach full time. I could not. I took a terminal master's degree and was told to come back to school when I wanted to devote full-time to my academic work. I never got back.

During my first semester at CCC, I had five classes with three preparations. I was teaching African history, African American history, and African

I recall one of my first class sessions vividly.

It was an afternoon political science class.

I had been so nervous about my teaching

assignment that I only had, at the most, five

pages of notes when the semester began.

—Jim Lacy

american politics. Just the thought of teaching college students scared me to death. I recall one of my first class sessions vividly. It was an afternoon political science class. I had been so nervous about my teaching assignment that I only had, at the most, five pages of notes when the semester began. I just could not bring myself to focus on preparing for it. In this first class that I "taught" at CCC, there were so many students that they were standing along the wall. At that time, the practice of delivering stream-of-consciousness rhetoric, also known as rappin', was in full force. After several minutes of spirited, overzealous,

verbal posturing, (rappin', if you will), I confessed to the class that I needed to slow down and to compose myself. One young man immediately said, "That's all right, brother, you're doing great! Keep teaching us." Thus, I began my teaching career at CCC. What a debt of gratitude I owe that student! Even today, I get great satisfaction from running into former students who say positive things about their time spent at CCC.

Another student from whom I learned humility was Norma Hodges. I had wrongly accused a classmate of hers of pretending to have read the assignment; in actuality, she had read it from a hardcover book while the rest of us were using the paperback edition. Norma spoke up in support of her classmate, insisting loudly and boldly that I owed the student an

apology. I did apologize and was inspired to establish the Norma Hodges Award for Humility.

In 1970, our African American studies classes were filled to overflowing. Students, in particular black students, were starved for knowledge about black people. For several years, I dare say that our student-to-faculty, full-time equivalent ratio was the highest of any department in the District.

There were a lot of Vietnam veterans on campus when I arrived. Some whose names I remember were O.T. Anderson, La Bruce Eaton, Joe Battle, and Ray Richardson. Many of them found their way to Dr. Doug Williams's classes in black psychology. These young men, having experienced firsthand what being on the battlefield was like, found a healing environment in Williams's classroom. One veteran described how meaningful it was to be able to be in a setting like the one he established. The lights would be turned off, and soft, soothing music would be played. "Doctor Doug," as he was called, would instruct the students to take this time to relax and to let go of any feelings of pressure or anxiety. This was in 1970! We now know how valuable this type of classroom setting is for advancing good mental health. The assertiveness of young people, including young black people, in the early seventies helped mightily to hasten our government's decision to quit Vietnam.

Reverend Fred Jackson, now on the staff of Neighborhood House in North Richmond, wrote a play he named, *Brother Dap*. It centered around a streetwise young man who in a dream was introduced to outstanding figures in black history. Reverend Jackson credits his black studies classes at CCC with inspiring him to undertake the writing of this play. I have enjoyed seeing it on public television many times over the years.

Students taking early childhood education classes for their credential took information back to their nursery schools, helping instill a greater sense of self-worth in their preschool children that stayed with them for the rest of their lives. Churches, recreation centers, other government agencies, as well as private corporations and businesses, began to use knowledge obtained from ethnic studies classes to expose the general public to a new understanding of what it means to be different in a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, sexually liberated society. That's why I believe what was accomplished during those 30 years at CCC had an impact far beyond the classroom.

I have many wonderful memories of the fine people I worked with at the college. Let me end with a tribute to one special person—Mrs. Agnes Clemmons. She was Joan Tucker’s mother, known to students and staff alike as “Mom.” This angel of a person brightened my day on so many occasions. She would come by my office, park her cleaning cart, and we would talk about the good things of life. Not once do I recall hearing a harsh word from her. She never criticized or complained to me about anyone. She always wore a smile. I treasure her memory.

Writing this piece has been a wonderful opportunity to rekindle the spirit of an earlier era. It was an era that contained many new ideas—ideas that have come into their own and that we now take for granted.

RESPONDING TO TURBULENT TIMES

Baji Majette Daniels

The career of Baji Majette Daniels took her from the classroom to the Writing Lab to the District Office. She shares the challenges she faced during her time at Contra Costa College, beginning as a very young teacher. She met those challenges to make the college a stronger and better place.

WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN hired to teach full time in the English Department at Contra Costa College. The year was 1969, and I was only 25.

The sixties and seventies comprised a tumultuous era, characterized by profound social and political shifts. Public colleges, in particular, were jolted as they struggled to address a changing student body. Students were making their voices heard on the campus, marching with picket signs and making in-your-face demands that administrators could not ignore. Cultural diversity was the rallying call, both in terms of curriculum development as well as faculty and staff hiring.

As nontraditional students took their seats in the classroom, the mission of the community college was put to the test. Vietnam veterans, middle-aged returning students, older adults, even high school dropouts, were

changing the face of what the college had looked like in years past. This new population required new ways of delivering instruction and services, and not everyone was ready to embrace change. It was into this rather turbulent environment that I began my college teaching career.

Dr. Leroy Mims, then dean of student services, had been persistent in recruiting me to the college, making three calls to Richmond High School before I was convinced to come to CCC for an interview. At the time, I was actively involved in teaching high school sophomores in the same school from which I had graduated in 1962. Dr. Mims's persistence paid off, however, and I agreed to submit my application to become a college teacher. I was granted an interview with the infamous English Department, known for high standards and brutal grading. Many students had withered under the tutelage of Sheila Wander and Robert Pence, and I'm sure I trembled as much as any student had in their classroom as I sat before the interview panel.

I suppose I performed sufficiently, for they did offer me the job. Of course, I accepted. No doubt some among the faculty presumed it was an "Affirmative Action hire," although such a presumption never bothered me. If true, it had gotten me through the door and offered me a chance. The rest was up to me. And over the next 30 years, I rose to any challenge put before me and made significant contributions to the college and the broader community to which I was deeply committed.

In addition to teaching (1969–1991), some of the other positions I held included coordinator of the Writing Center and College Skills Center (1984–1990); assistant dean of community education (1984–1990); activity one director for Title III federal grant (October 1993–March 1995); Academic Senate president (1991–1995); assistant dean of instruction (1997–1999); and interim vice chancellor of educational programs and services for the District (April 1995–September 1996).

Using the power of these positions, I exerted creative leadership, along with my personal commitment; nevertheless, none of my efforts would have been successful without the support of an entire team. Collegial teamwork was always a major factor as I worked to accomplish my goals. Among my contributions to the college and the District in these various positions, I am most proud of the following:

- Designing and implementing the Pyramid Program, a mentoring program for at-risk African American teenage males to reduce their drop-out rates; this program was recognized by the state chancellor's office as an outstanding model and received funding for multiple years.
- Collaborating with city agencies and organizations to bring academic and training programs into the community, including opening the Small Business Development Center at Hilltop Mall that provided a One-Stop Shop of employment services.
- Writing curriculum for online courses and expanding faculty appreciation and participation in distance learning as an alternative mode of instruction.
- Establishing the college's first Writing Center and integrating it directly into faculty load; this center continues to be a great asset for students whose reading and writing skills need remediation.
- Increasing the noncredit offerings, especially in terms of the Older Adults Program.
- Expanding international education at CCC.
- Fostering shared governance throughout the college and the District as a result of the omnibus state reform legislation (AB 1725), and contributing to greater faculty and staff participation in decision making.
- Promoting student-based learning/learning-centered instruction and working with faculty to move beyond the didactic lecture-based format.

Given how involved I was with my career for so many years, one might presume that retirement would be quite a challenging adjustment. Not so! When I retired in 1999, I also made another major life change. I left California, the only state where I had ever lived, and headed south to Atlanta, Georgia. Since then, I have fallen in love with the southern way of life as I continue creating a wonderful new chapter in the continuing saga of Baji.

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CHAPTER



The Women's Re-Entry Program started at Diablo Valley College in the early 1970s.

Revolution in the Classroom: The Growth of Women's Programs at the Colleges

Among the most significant changes in community college classrooms over the last 60 years began in the 1970s, when thousands of women, many of whom needed to work to support their families, began returning to college. These newcomers were attracted by outreach programs offered on campus and by the success of the women who came before them. They were serious and highly motivated, and they brought a wealth of life experience to

the classroom. Their presence helped change the curriculum, the services provided by the college, and their classmates. Dobie Gillis, the stereotypical college student of the early 1960s television series, met Supermom, and she made him a better, more serious scholar.

Susan Goldstein, whose career at Diablo Valley College (DVC) has spanned 40 years, has always been involved in introducing innovation to the institution. In this thoughtful article, she shares with us the enthusiasm of women who overcame the resistance and inertia of the academic status quo. She also offers an analysis of what happened after the program achieved great success—what survived and what disappeared.

Marge Lasky was one of few faculty members who taught full-time at all three colleges in the Contra Costa Community College District (District). In addition to a distinguished academic career, she was the first woman to serve as president of the United Faculty. In this brief account, she shows how the same forces that Susan Goldstein describes, which were in operation in the formation and decline of the women's program at DVC, were at work at Los Medanos College and Contra Costa College.

SUSAN GOLDSTEIN: THE WOMEN'S PROGRAMS AT DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE

I CAME TO DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE in 1969 as a full-time temporary instructor in U.S. history, replacing Virgil Woolbright, who had a grant to develop an African American history course. I was told the job was given to me, rather than to a man, because they knew they would have to fire me at the end of the year, and because I was a married woman, it would be okay to let me go. Luckily, this was a time of booming enrollments and enlarging opportunities to hire full-time faculty, and at the end of the school year, DVC President Dr. William Niland and Dean of Instruction John Kelly offered me a tenure-track position.

I came to DVC at a wonderful point in its history. I was part of one of the largest groups of people hired at a single time. More women (perhaps other departments had the same rationale for why it was okay to hire women), more

minorities—including longtime social science instructor Nat Larks, a student intern and graduate of one of the first outreach programs DVC offered—and more recent graduate school students were hired than ever before. We new hires bonded quickly, in part because of the new faculty orientation program run by Assistant Dean of Instruction Norris Pope, and in part because many of us participated in a staff development program in humanistic education, led by counselor and psychology instructor Stan Yale.

One of the things of which DVC can be proud is that it offered women's studies classes as early as any college or university in the country. By 1970, DVC had an English class in women's literature, and a class titled Psychology of Women followed swiftly on its heels. A Women's Re-entry Program, a Women's Center, and a variety of related women's programs were quickly established. Some lasted more than 20 years, some died a natural death, and some got killed by opponents.

What made this possible? A small group of faculty who took leadership in organizing for change, a large group of new faculty who felt empowered and were encouraged to innovate, a relatively small college with few layers of bureaucracy, and a time of great social change outside of the college. With great gusto, we sang, "The Times They Are a-Changin'."

Emerging Feminist Movement

THE EARLY LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE was spearheaded by a small group of tenured faculty members who were excited about the new waves in their academic fields and were energized by the emerging feminist movement. They found allies in the new hires who brought graduate school or teaching experiences and were open to broadening the curricula and developing programs to empower students. Feminists, like other minority groups, had the example of black faculty and students across the country, who pointed out in reasoned discussion and in lively demonstrations that they had been left out of the canon and the focus of higher education and were demanding change. The administration at DVC was slow to support the women's movement on campus. Larry Crouchett, who ran the small Special Pro-

grams office, stands out as the most supportive of the then all-male administration at DVC. Over time, some administrators bowed to pressure, and as more women joined the administration, women's issues came to be seen as more acceptable and mainstream.

The levels of bureaucracy were less burdensome in those days, and that made it easier to try new things, to get courses through the Instruction Committee and into the college schedule. Shortly before I retired in 2003, I worked on getting a new psychology course approved. My division representative to the Instruction Committee told me to expect a three-semester wait for the course to be approved. By that time I would have been retired, and certainly the novelty—and maybe my enthusiasm for the new course—would have worn off. In my early days at DVC, it was much easier for us to create new courses. When Marge Lasky came to DVC in 1973 as a temporary full-time history instructor, she proposed, and guided adoption of, the first Women's History class. It is unlikely any temporary instructor would take that on now.

I believe Marilyn Braiger was the mastermind and dynamo behind the creation of women's programs. She was assisted by fellow English faculty members Bea Taines and Natalie Dunn, along with Rose Hall from sociology. They, among others, were the pioneers in women's studies at DVC. All of them had found ways to include women's issues, feminist scholars like Margaret Mead, and feminist writers like Virginia Woolf in their general education courses. They organized a year-long series of workshops on women's studies and the need for a women's reentry program and other services for women students. These workshops were usually held at night in the DVC Cafeteria, after dinner was finished. Many male instructors came—often to argue against the women's ideas—but we were all stimulated to think about how our traditional academic disciplines had been male centered and how the college could open its doors wider to help reentry women in the days to come.

Now, it is hard to imagine—for any reason—being able to get large groups of faculty across disciplines to gather *voluntarily* to argue, explore, and present academic and pedagogical ideas. It was an exciting and difficult time. People who were committed to general education (core courses

that all faculty taught) felt challenged. Many men believed they were being attacked by the new curricula.

Determining the Course

MEANWHILE, THE PIONEERS were both writing course outlines for new women's studies classes and strategizing about how to incorporate them into the curricula. We asked ourselves, "Should we be trying to establish a women's studies department, which was happening on some four-year campuses, or should we write courses focusing on women that would meet existing general education requirements and would be adopted by existing departments?" At DVC, we decided on the latter strategy, which did help institutionalize the courses into the curriculum.

The pioneers encouraged other women to develop women's studies classes in their departments. I started to teach women's studies in the early 1970s. Rose Hall had created Social Science 220 as the women's studies equivalent of Social Science 110, the core course that met the American Institutions graduation requirement. She said, "You should teach this class." I said, "I can't teach it. I've never taken or taught a women's studies class." Hall said, "Neither has anyone else. We're creating it." And, with that, she gave me permission to be a pioneer, too, and help create this field.

Sharon Garcia (health), Ann Piper (humanities), Sherry MacGregor (humanities), Ruth Sutter (history), and Elane Rehr (psychology) all created and taught women's studies courses starting in the 1970s. Getting new classes introduced, scheduling block classes, and getting rooms for activities all relied on help from these five women. Faculty kept insisting we needed a coordinator of women's programs who could help develop and promote programs and advocate for women on campus. In an important step toward institutionalizing these efforts, the Faculty Senate established the Women's Programs Committee and got release time for Marge Smith (health) to be coordinator of women's programs.

When there was an opening for the dean of evening programs, it was understood a woman would be hired. One of the titles assigned to this

position was coordinator of women's programs. Once Dr. Jan McAfee was hired, we felt that we had gained official recognition. Women faculty continued to meet and plan. It's hard to believe how many 8 a.m. meetings we held in the Administration Building conference rooms in those years. These were not gatherings of a senate committee or a required department meeting. They were 10 to 20 women faculty coming together because we cared. We met regularly to develop a vocational certificate in women's services, plan course schedules, talk about how to hire more women, support the Women's Center, and plan activities for our own staff development and for public programs to educate students and the community.

Barbara Baldwin (social science) organized several staff development programs under the title, *A Second Look at the Second Sex*. Sometimes we invited outside speakers. One favorite was Chitra Devrakaruni, then a Contra Costa College English teacher publishing her first novels, who came and read from her works in progress. But mostly the presenters were our own women faculty, some of whom shared what they were learning in their women's studies courses. Other presentations focused on developing new courses, like *Women in Film* and *Women Artists*. Some covered the techniques that were being established for use in women's studies, like oral history projects. More than once Barbara Baldwin not only organized the program and presented a paper, but also catered the lunch. The excitement that surrounded what we were learning and sharing was an important part of the experience.

Women faculty made themselves available to speak in a variety of programs on campus and in the community. They spoke to women's organizations and introduced films on campus dealing with women's issues. They also organized specialized programs. For example, Elane Rehr (psychology) and Tina Levy (math) put together a plan to address math anxiety, in which some reentry women were selected as math tutors for other reentry women.

Women's Reentry Program

IN THE EARLY 1970s, the day and evening students were remarkably different. Almost all day students were aged 18 to 21 and lived at home with their parents. Although they all worked part time, I never had a student say she or he couldn't come to class because of work. Night students commonly worked full time and came to campus after work. The women's programs pioneers recognized that some at-home moms (we didn't use that term yet) would take classes at DVC if they could come while their kids were at school and if they could be assured that other people like them would be there and that the college would be supportive.

In the beginning, we taught general education classes to a block of reentry students. One group might take Social Science 110 and English 122 from two different teachers, and the content or the techniques might be shaped to the particular group. The students easily formed study groups and support networks and the retention rate was high. The first groups generally had better academic skills and interests than our typical students. They were usually married, white, middle class, in their thirties or forties, with school-age children—although there was always a range. Some groups continued to be friends for many years.

Sandra Mills and Nancy Schwemberger were in the first class of reentry students. Mills went on to become a valuable longtime DVC employee, serving as the secretary of the Social Science Division. Schwemberger told us that she had come to registration in the gym twice, with the encouragement of her husband, but each time she was overwhelmed and intimidated by the process. The third time, her husband said, "Don't come home without signing up for a class." That time she saw the table that said "Women's Re-entry Program." Mills and Schwemberger became two of the leaders of this first wave of reentry students.

Another member of the first class, who went on to UC Berkeley and then to the Lutheran seminary affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, was one of the first women ordained as a minister in her denomination.

Male instructors, like Jim Ardini (physics), always taught in the reentry program, but I do remember one fight with Bill Smith (psychology) in the

Social Science Division. Smith insisted that he should teach the reentry section of Psych 122, because a woman instructor would teach the women to be unhappy in their marriage and promote divorce.

Women's Center

THOSE FIRST REENTRY WOMEN wanted a women's center. I don't know if someone planted the idea in their heads or if they thought it up. They tried to make an appointment with President Niland, but were repeatedly brushed off. Finally, they were determined to bring their children to sit outside his office until Norma Hibbs, his secretary, got them in to see him. They had joked that they would supply their kids with lollipops so their sticky hands would get all over everything. It didn't take long until the women did get a room in a portable building and then two rooms in the new Faculty Office Building for a center.

This incubating Women's Center was staffed at first by women faculty who scheduled office hours there. I believe Diane Scott-Summers and other women counselors donated a couch and other furnishings until some recycled campus furniture arrived. The original cobbled-together plan lasted for many years. It included a faculty advisor who taught a class that trained students to meet the public and do peer counseling, and a classified center coordinator who ran the operation. Sandra Holman was the center coordinator for many years, followed by Dona De Russo. Both contributed enormously, doing academic and personal counseling, developing and administering grant proposals, and supervising the students who helped staff the center. The center served as a place where students could get referrals to campus and community services, find support from other students, form study groups, and organize activities like student clubs and a brown-bag speaker series.

Resistance from Colleagues

SOME OF MY MALE COLLEAGUES were convinced that the center either performed abortions or advocated for them. Dr. Niland refused to set foot inside the center, even for the annual holiday party. The cheap instant coffee drew many male faculty members with offices in the same building at least once a day. Over the years, many efforts were made to shut the center down. Joe King, the most determined and energetic of the opponents of women's programs, called federal agencies to investigate the center as a violation of Title IX (federal law banning sex discrimination in schools). The first two investigations found the programs to be nondiscriminatory, but the third inquiry forced the DVC Women's Center (and its sister centers at Contra Costa College and Los Medanos College) to alter its name and mission. (The DVC Women's Center's name changed to Re-Entry Center.) This was a terrible blow to the center's supporters, though its structure and activities remained largely unchanged.

When Phyllis Peterson became president of DVC in 1984, one of her first community events was to accept an award from the Soroptimists of Contra Costa County in recognition of what the college had done for women. She, in turn, suggested the plaque be put on display in the Women's Center. That sense of connection and acceptance of our legitimacy was an important symbol of the partnership that bound the administration, women activists, students, and the community. President Peterson's action showed that she took pride in the women's programs that her college offered to the community.

The battles over women's programs continued in many forms. One year when I was the chair of the Women's History Week committee, Joe King tried everything to stop me from putting on the program. He called me at home and berated me at length. He got Dean of Instruction John Kelly to try to bar our keynote speaker for being too radical. (They did force me to change the title of her talk, which was "The Cult of Motherhood.") Finally, King and a group of Catholic, antifeminist community women went to the Governing Board and demanded that its members stop me from putting on the program. They denounced me for, among other things, speaking in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment in my class. The Board did not cancel our scheduled program, but it did agree, to my dismay, to give King and

his band of activist women an equal sum to put on an antifeminist week of programs at the college. Although we did get to put on that year's program, it was the last year that we had a big program in honor of Women's History Week. I know I was not willing to go through all that again.

What Happened to These Programs?

THE MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES at DVC led to a number of new courses in a variety of disciplines. Some of the courses continue to be taught 30 or 40 years later. Some of the courses dropped out of the curriculum when the teachers who created and championed them moved on to other projects or retired. Some are taught today by part-timers. Perhaps our choice almost 40 years ago not to establish a separate women's studies department made this inevitable. No one who was hired then or is hired now as full-time faculty is required to have a background in women's studies. If there had been a women's studies department, it might have been killed off at some point for budgetary reasons. On the other hand, a department would have put these courses on firmer footing. They would have been protected by the institutional structure and thus harder to dismantle.

The reentry program—blocks of classes aimed at this particular group—died. It became less critical once the daytime student body was more age-diverse and reentering school was a more common occurrence. It might have continued if what new reentry students needed had been redefined, but no one was available to do that.

DVC no longer has a reentry center. It was killed a few years ago as a budget measure. Some faculty members unsuccessfully tried to fight the closure. Perhaps the center is needed less today because women or reentry students feel more empowered to come to college. Today, women students outnumber men at DVC, as they do in most American colleges. But the students whom the center served at the time it was closed were those who needed some encouragement. They were more problematic, less prepared for college, more likely to be poor, and had a greater variety of social needs than the average student. If a reentry center existed today, it would be able to continue to do outreach to the women who are less apt to enroll in college

and more prone to drop out. It could still help to promote college success for a significant group.

The vocational certificate in women's services was dropped in 2008. Its champions had largely retired or run out of energy, and it was hard to hold the hope that relevant jobs were waiting for women who earned the certificate.

What Can We Learn?

OLD-TIMERS ALWAYS BELIEVE that the past was special. Newcomers routinely wonder why people like me argue that DVC was a special place. Those of us who participated in women's programs as faculty, counselors, classified staff, and students know that we were part of an extraordinary environment.

We were at the forefront of a revolution that was going on all around us. It was an upheaval that was changing the role of women in education and in society, leading more of them to want to go to school, to learn about their own experience, and to see other women as "sisters." As faculty, we got to bring that revolution onto our campus and into our classrooms. Many of our students saw their women teachers as role models, plus they had the experience of having their own issues as the focus of their classes, typically for the first time.

What DVC did for women came from the bottom up. It helped to have a dean who had women's programs as part of her job, and to have a woman serving as the college president. But the vision, the energy, and the womanpower came primarily from committed, energetic, passionate (and largely young) teachers, who saw DVC as *their college* and who

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were committed to doing their work in line with their values. It helped that some important goals were in line with college interests, such as increasing student enrollment, and that fewer state, district, and college bureaucratic barriers stood in the way, making innovation more possible.

Movements always wear out. We can't expect that people will continue to meet after regular hours, develop new programs, and keep fighting the adversaries. Activists step back for their own reasons: because they are tired of fighting, because they need a break, because of external circumstances. But my experience in women's programs was a defining one for me. I spent my career in a college that let me and my colleagues serve many women. I still meet women who tell me that a women's studies class they took with me years ago changed their lives. And although I am now retired, I am reluctant to give up teaching a section of Psychology of Women, because I know there is still important work to be done.

MARGE LASKY: WOMEN'S STUDIES AT LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE AND CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE

SOME OF THE FACTORS that Susan Goldstein points out as critical to the development of Women's Programs at DVC were also in evidence at Los Medanos College (LMC) and Contra Costa College (CCC) during the 1970s and 1980s: a small group of committed feminist leaders, innovative faculty, relatively few layers of bureaucracy, and a movement for social change. But CCC and LMC were much smaller than DVC in both physical size and numbers of faculty and staff. In addition, Los Medanos was founded on the idea that women's and ethnic issues would be infused into all courses, programs, and services. No balkanizing would be permitted. Thus, the history of women's programs at LMC and CCC differs considerably from that of DVC.

In LMC's early years, its relatively young faculty and staff spent hours planning for courses and services. Not quite two years after the school was founded, women faculty reported the double or triple bind in which they found themselves: "as teachers in our field of expertise, as 'experts' in infusing the women's perspective into the curriculum, and, for some of us, as rep-

representatives of third world/minority groups called upon to infuse an ethnic perspective into the curriculum. Too often, we have felt isolated on campus, with little time left over to socialize or share ideas” (Source: “Report on Los Medanos College Women’s Faculty Retreat,” January 7–9, 1977). To deal with these frustrations, women faculty began meeting informally in the fall of 1976. By that time, a few women had become increasingly convinced of the need for women’s studies courses, and the college’s goal of curricular infusion was more myth than reality. Even though President Jack Carhart agreed that infusion was problematical, he and other LMC administrators held their ground: women’s studies courses could only be experimental and taught for three semesters; they could not become a staple in the college curriculum. I think the first women’s studies course at LMC was History of Women in the United States, which I taught in spring 1976. Other experimental courses in English and in social sciences followed.

In January 1977, participants at a weekend retreat at Asilomar—proposed and designed by faculty members (Olga Arenivar, Gail Boucher, April Corioso, Dorothy Tsuruta, and this writer) and funded by LMC’s Professional Grants Committee—fleshed out the institutional and interpersonal problems related to women’s studies. That retreat resulted in a series of monthly meetings focusing on the curricular needs of female students. Out of those meetings, the faculty proposed that the Professional Grants Committee fund and offer release time to put together a series of in-service training workshops on women’s issues for the faculty at large and to develop specific classes related to women’s studies. The committee funded the in-service workshops but, not surprisingly, refused to support the curriculum development. As a result, Olga Arenivar and I coordinated a grant that provided a short-term course on women’s issues for interested faculty, invited outside consultants to campus, and offered a trio of three-hour seminars to faculty, during which we attempted to educate participants on women’s perspectives. Was the grant’s implementation worth the many hours of volunteer time that went into it? At

In hindsight, infusion never worked as envisioned and some faculty members disliked spending nine hours focused on women’s concerns.

the time, Olga noted, “It was really a wonderful experience working with the group. Everyone learned a lot, and we were happy to share it” (Source: Special Report: 1977–78 Professional Grants and Sabbaticals” from *Development Los Medanos College*, April/May/June 1978). In hindsight, infusion never worked as envisioned and some faculty members disliked spending nine hours focused on women’s concerns.

For some years, a Steering Committee for Women’s Concerns continued to meet at LMC. In the spring of 1980, a day-long conference of faculty, staff, and students, with some 150 participants, was held. A number of recommendations came out of that get-together. Whether or not the institution implemented all of the recommendations is beyond the scope of my research, but LMC did institute one of them: a Women’s Center with a part-time staff person. However, in true LMC fashion, the center came to be known as the Not for Women Only Center, and it suffered the same fate that befell the DVC center. LMC currently has an ethnic studies requirement, so courses dealing with specific ethnic groups are part of the ongoing curriculum; *however*, the only course that might be considered part of women’s studies is a humanities course on Jane Austen.

Women’s Studies at Contra Costa College

WOMEN’S STUDIES AT CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE followed another trajectory. In the early 1970s, two students, Angie Kucharenko and Sandy Cubbles, discussed how to devise a women’s studies program in Al Youn’s English class. With Youn’s encouragement, they recruited faculty member Dorothy Bryant, now a well-known author, as their advisor. The women met weekly, wrote proposals, and also envisioned a women’s reentry program and child-care center. When Bryant went on sabbatical, librarian Helen Cushman became the group’s advisor. In 1972, Social Science 140, Contemporary Women, was introduced. Joanne Eakin, an adjunct faculty member, became the instructor, and 70 students enrolled in the class. Negative feedback ensued. In 1973, Dean of Instruction Marge Bate received a widely publicized letter that called for the establishment of a Men’s Study Depart-

ment. In seeking to become chair of the department, the male faculty letter writer and self-proclaimed “champion of men’s rights” admitted to one liability: “I am married to a woman.”

Ignoring the negativity, the original strategizers continued to meet, with support from DVC faculty and students. By 1978, a core group of faculty, students, and staff convinced the new president, Rex Craig, and the dean of instruction, Bob Martincich, to open a women’s center. The committee then sought a faculty member who would receive release time to coordinate the center and teach women’s studies courses. No one at CCC wanted the position and entreaties to DVC faculty were graciously refused. After some anguish about leaving LMC, I agreed to take the position. In the “horse trade” that followed (described as such by Bob Martincich), I went to CCC in exchange for “C” contract time or additional teaching hours that CCC gave LMC—remember, this was an era with fewer layers of bureaucracy.

CCC Women’s Center Opens

THE CENTER WAS SET UP in a small, windowless room in the Library, and various volunteers, including the college president, painted the walls. CCC lacked the resources of its sister schools, which made the opening of the center and the granting of release time something of a miracle. Although I originally staffed the center, I quickly found a well-known older student, Becky Turner, to take over on a part-time basis. It took a semester or two before she was put on the college’s payroll. I remember the faculty and staff at the three colleges endlessly discussing how to classify and compensate the staff at the three women’s centers. We sought a uniform standard, equal to what DVC received, though we never succeeded in bringing LMC up to that level.

Several energizing years for women followed. It is amazing how many events and activities were accomplished with some release time, a paid staff position, volunteers, a 21-member advisory committee, and an identifiable physical space. A series of weekly brown-bag lunches, with topics such as Women in Religion, gave college personnel and community speakers opportunities to share information. Such conferences as Women

and Finances, Women and Legal Rights, and Women—Do It Yourself (on home maintenance and repair), typically cosponsored with other campus departments, brought out large weekend crowds (who could always count on CCC’s child care center to look after their children). A informative monthly newsletter was widely circulated. T-shirts displaying a peace dove intertwined with the women’s symbol, designed by student Sandi Ragan, were sold to raise funds to publish the center’s once-a-year book of women’s writings, *Womenswords*. Special programs included an

. . . you could walk into any women’s studies class at CCC and be struck by the diversity in the age, race, class, physical abilities, and even gender of the students.

orientation for reentry women, celebrations such as the memorable “A Poet, A Plumber, and a Judge,” and the screening of award-winning movies. Support groups coalesced.

Experimental classes, including an introduction to the trades, assertiveness training for Asian women, and a program for displaced homemakers (the latter funded by the state chancellor’s office and located in a local church), were added to the ever-growing number of women’s

studies offerings. In time, a more spacious center with windows and a location close to other student services became a reality.

The most remarkable aspect of the women’s programs at CCC was their diversity. Special classes on the psychology of black women (offered by Geri Green), the above-mentioned class on Asian women (offered by Thais Kishi), and a class on La Mujer (taught by Esther May) answered some of the needs of women of color. Also, you could walk into any women’s studies class at CCC and be struck by the diversity in the age, race, class, physical abilities, and even gender of the students. The Women’s Center had started out as an enclave of older white women, but that situation changed dramatically over time. The biggest shift came when Gloria Campbell, an African American student, decided to volunteer at the center. Before long, Campbell brought her friends, as did Andrea Sandoval and Stephanie Gutierrez, Therese Breen, Robert (Bobby) Muzinich, and

many other CCC students. The center was soon a reflection of the community the college served.

But the good times did not last. The administration withdrew the release time and a cutback in the social science offerings prompted me to volunteer to transfer to DVC. Kathleen Wothe then staffed the center for a number of years, before joining the CCC faculty, and a few people followed her, all of them working hard to keep the center alive and viable. However, the forces that Susan Goldstein describes as responsible for ending the DVC center also shuttered the CCC center. As evidence of the much-diminished program, the fall 2009 schedule of classes at CCC shows only one women's studies course, *Women in Literature*, offered on Saturdays and taught by a full-time faculty member.

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CHAPTER



Helping launch Chicano studies at Contra Costa College was just the beginning for Maria Theresa Viramontes.

From Classroom to Boardroom: One Personal Journey, 1968–2008

Maria Theresa Viramontes

This account chronicles the extraordinarily full and rewarding career of one former Contra Costa College (CCC) student. An eager Maria Viramontes entered into the struggle to establish the first Chicano studies program in the Contra Costa Community College District (District). We see how both her father, and then Chancellor Karl Drexel, used the youthful protest as a teachable moment. The list of the participants in those first classes, and what they went on to accomplish, is not only a remarkable tribute to the efforts of these pioneers, but also to the success of the college as a

whole. Viramontes helped generations of students as a key staff member in the state legislature and as the first woman and first Hispanic elected to the Governing Board of the District.

MY CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE JOURNEY started at Richmond High School in 1969, with a pink-slip demand from the dean's office. I was relieved to know I was heading for the gym and not the office. But I was amazed to find the only kids who showed up for this meeting were Hispanic—about 100 of them. Running the meeting were four charming Hispanic men: Frank Hernandez, John Marquez, Max Martinez, and Gabe Zaragoza. The gathering included some young veterans just returning from service, but they were all current students or alumni of CCC. They were also active members of the Latin American Student Union (LASU), and had organized this event with the help of Thayer Johnson of the CCC Registrar's Office, and the deans and Counseling Departments of Richmond Unified School District.

The college students began sharing their personal stories of going to college, many of them the first in their family to do so. They described the crisis of opportunity that the Hispanic community was experiencing because nearly 50 percent of Hispanic students were dropping out of high school. This statistic was crushing our community with long-term poverty and limited upward job mobility. They challenged us to guess where our future community leaders were going to come from when Hispanics statewide had less than a two-percent admission rate to college. Their mission that day, and in the months to come, was to encourage Hispanic juniors and seniors to finish high school, complete the college prep program, and apply to college. They provided us with contact information to apply to UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, and Contra Costa College, and they requested our attendance at a future youth conference. They inspired us to believe in ourselves and to realize that we could make a difference in what was going on in our community if we would finish high school and attend college.

I was 17 years old and, like remembering your first kiss, I will always remember this as the first time the passion and commitment of Contra Costa College students engaged in the community touched me and energized the course of my life.

I was working for the telephone company when John Marquez tracked me down. He had heard that I did not follow through on my scholarship and enrollment to UC Berkeley. The fact was, I was not socially prepared for the large, complex Cal campus, nor for the craziness of 1969 Berkeley. He invited me to attend the Hispanic Youth Conference, where I would be able to meet other graduates and college students who could help me learn how to succeed in my freshman year of college. He encouraged me to apply to CCC, a smaller college, and then consider transferring to a four-year institution of my choice, or return to Berkeley, older and wiser.

During 1968 and 1969, many people and institutions were committed to helping students like me. Among them were the LASU volunteers, including Max Martinez, John Marquez, Gabe Zaragoza, Frank Hernandez, Vince Martinez, Art Cruz, and Roque Maravilla, who hosted planning meetings; a high school student named Ray Velasquez, who reached out to his neighborhood; Thayer Johnston and his staff in the College Registrar's Office; and the community funding support provided by the United Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations, with its director, Gonzalo Rucobo, and its board's education/youth commissioner, Frank Hernandez. They all helped put on a youth conference in mid-1969 to recruit hundreds of Hispanic high school students from private and public schools to attend Contra Costa College. During that same period, the LASU organized a hiring committee made up of Max Martinez, John Marquez, Leroy Mims of Special Programs, and Dr. Russ "Bud" Stillwell from the Counseling Department, who hired the first Hispanic counselor at CCC, Al Zuniga.

I did attend the youth conference and decided to register for the fall at CCC, but my registration appointment was for the last night of registration. The lines were long and I found it difficult to get any classes, since

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most courses were already closed by that evening. I thought I might have to wait another semester and apply to CCC again. But John Marquez, who was working there that night, saw me and helped me get “petition status” stickers for class admittance on my card. He encouraged me to stay in each class as a petitioner, because many students drop out or change classes the first weeks of school. I did what he recommended, and I had a solid class program by the first month of school.

During that first year at CCC, many people—my counselor, Al Zuniga; the Student Support Services Office; great faculty members; and the mentoring, friendship, and support of LASU volunteer tutors—helped me succeed as a full-time student with honors, even though I was working full time for the phone company, too. Needless to say, I became a member of LASU in the fall of 1969, and I attended the first psychology class from a La Raza perspective, which was modeled on Psychology 110 and was taught by Al Zuniga.

Finding Our Identity

BETWEEN THE FALL OF 1969 and spring of 1970, the psychology class and an Analysis of American Social Institutions class helped attract new Hispanic students to the college and awaken them to the challenges of assimilation in American society. It was there that we dared question our self-identity and community identity. We verbalized the issues of alienation and the price and promise of assimilation, and we personally explored the deep scars from overt racism. We examined the impact of indirect racism that undermined our efforts for inclusion and what it meant to see ourselves through the eyes of bias. We realized society’s limited expectations for our achievement and the barriers to access. We discovered we were simply invisible to many institutions. We examined stereotypes and distortions of social image, the personal feelings of inferiority or rage, and the unintended consequences of that anger and alienation in our lives. We explored the broadest view of what it means to be of mixed heritage in modern American culture.

These deep and personally moving conversations and our social studies research spilled over from the classroom into our lives in the commu-

nity. We became more engaged in increasing Hispanic student attendance at Contra Costa College. We worked to open educational opportunities through outreach to those needing a second chance after dropping out of high school. Many students volunteered to go into local churches serving the Hispanic community, and to community dances, cultural events, and neighborhoods where Hispanics shopped or just hung out.

Each semester, more students signed up to serve at registration and later helped students with computerized registration or filling out financial assistance applications. I was engaged as a CCC student advocate with the Richmond Unified School District, negotiating the implementation of the Bilingual Tutorial Project. Many CCC students who wanted to be teachers became tutors in the Saturday program at St. Mark's Church in downtown Richmond, which served primarily elementary students from Lincoln and Peres schools, the lowest-performing schools with the highest Hispanic student populations.

I was a tutor in the Bilingual Tutorial Project until I transferred from CCC and was accepted into the first national undergraduate Teacher Corps Program at the University of the Pacific. David Perales, a transfer student from CCC and an honor student at UC Berkeley, was the first student coordinator of the project; he later graduated from Hastings Law School. College students were regularly recruited on a paid and unpaid basis to work in this project to build literacy, tutor reading and math, and provide homework support for the highest-risk children. After working with parents of these children, I was not surprised that the first English as a second language (ESL) classes for Spanish-speaking parents were started at Lincoln School and St. Mark's Church with the support of CCC faculty and were coordinated by Al Zuniga. In fact, ESL became one of the most popular outreach efforts serving the adult Hispanic community.

In our student journey, there was a growing recognition of the need to promote multicultural studies and events like Cinco de Mayo, to connect the community and the college. After significant discussion of these needs at a community meeting, and follow-up meetings at a private home hosted by Esther May, the students prepared a plan. LASU students voted unanimously to ask the District to create a Chicano Studies Department. How this was to be achieved was debated, including the comments of a few

who felt violence was the only way to get attention for and resolution of our needs. No one was naïve about how difficult it would be to change a college institution to serve a population that was virtually invisible to them. But the prevailing feeling was that a rational, peaceful proposition, with a sophisticated understanding of how the District received federal and state funding, would help our cause. If that didn't work, we would resort to legal options. I wholeheartedly supported this course of action.

We did not see the Chicano Studies Department as simply an academic entity. It was our piece of land within the college to build access everywhere—like spokes on a wheel—to recruit, keep, transfer, and enable students to graduate without losing their deep connection to the community. The LASU members voted to elect a team of seven students and community members to represent our concerns to Chancellor Karl Drexel in a meeting in the campus Administration Building. Max Martinez, John Marquez, Esther May, Alma Martinez, Rudy Venegas, and I were selected as the students, and Al Sandoval and/or Bill Espinoza would represent community members because of their experience with large Hispanic nonprofit organizations. It was agreed that the seven would enter the meeting with the administrative staff and the remaining members of our group would occupy the building peacefully with signs and/or walk outside. Art Romero, then LASU president, would remain with the students outside and provide assurance.

I spoke with my father the day before the meeting, telling him that the students were going to sit in at the Administration Building while we seven negotiated for our department. He listened very carefully and asked a few questions. He asked me if I was prepared if the police were called to clear the building and arrest my student friends. What would happen then? I told him I thought we would be willing to go with the police without resistance and that most of the students participating felt the same way. He wanted me to be sure this was the decision I wanted to make, because if I were arrested, he wanted me to know that he would not come and bail me out. I should be willing to stay in jail for my beliefs until I was released. It was a sobering conversation to have with my father. I was 18 years old and I was afraid, but I knew that bringing access to the college for our community was the right

thing to do. Maybe we didn't know the best way, but our bodies were all we had, so we would sit them down. This was all we knew.

When I got up in the morning, I decided to take a page from my grandmother Lupe's humor. She always said (my English translation), "When going outside, expect the unexpected and be sure you have clean, presentable panties." I wore two pairs of underpants to school that day; at least if I was arrested, I had some clean ones with me. I also put a toothbrush in my pocket.

Al Solano and Bob Cruz from the U.S. Department of Education, Sandoval Martinez from the League of United Latin American Citizens, and Bill Espinoza and Gonzalo Rucobo from the United Council had prepared us with information regarding matriculation and federal and state funding issues in earlier discussions. The students came ready for the meeting. Our only disappointment was that the administration did not allow any members of the community to be part of the negotiation, only students. At the end of the day, no one was arrested for the sit-in demonstration, and Chancellor Karl Drexel agreed fully to our request for the Chicano Studies Department. I intuitively recognized his amusement at his role that day, and I took no disrespect from his nonverbal expression. I felt it was rooted in his almost paternal appreciation for us as students. Even if we were a pain in the neck that day, we were *his* pain in the neck. I had the privilege of interacting with him again many years later, which only confirmed this insight of pride and pleasure he gained from the leadership achievements of students.

I have to admit, there were some tense moments. Watching the parade of students and community members outside the window holding up signs and sometimes chanting made me realize how real and serious this matter could get. But the sign in Spanish that kept appearing in the window, "No more Toro, pupu," really lifted my spirits and gave me a laugh.

In the fall of 1970, Pete Silva was hired as director of Chicano studies, and Tony Duran, Olivia Ramses, and Al Zuniga anchored the department as full-time faculty. Part-time faculty were contracted as needed. For the next 25 years, the department was an access point to attendance at CCC.

What We Became

ONE OF THE LONG-LASTING EFFECTS of our efforts in those early years was how students went on to have a positive impact in the community. Here are some examples:

- Cesar Perales worked as a certified public accountant for Levi Straus and then opened his own business.
- L. Gonzalez started a recycling business.
- Bobby Salcido owned a construction and electrical business.
- Alfred Garcia was an executive with Pacific Bell.
- Art Cruz had a career in law enforcement.
- Sylvia Alvarez, May Espinoza, Marco Gonzales, L. Hernandez-Barron, Nora Pantoja, Virginia Rhome, Rudy Venegas, and Maria Viramontes all became preschool through high school teachers. (May Espinoza's story is particularly inspiring. She was a mother of 10 who came to Contra Costa in her early 40s and was in the first Chicano studies class. After transferring from CCC, she finished her degree and returned to teach for 20 years in the Richmond schools. She recently retired.)
- Peter Cantu, Frank Hernandez, John Marquez, Max Martinez, Roque Maravilla, Esther May, and M. Terrarsas all became college teachers or administrators.
- Roberto Reyes was a union organizer.
- Genoveva Garcia, Patricia Ramirez, and Andres Soto became County Health Department professionals.
- David Ruppert is an attorney.
- Maria Alegria, John Marquez, Emma Martinez, H. Martinez, Davis Melgoza, Gonzalo Rucobo, Jr., and C. Vargas, became leaders in non-profit community organizations and faith-based institutions.
- D. Perales and Maria Viramontes worked as staff members for state legislators.
- Linda Olivera, John Marquez, and Gonzalo Rucobo, Sr. worked for the California Department of State Labor Standards.
- Elected officials included Hon. Genoveva Garcia-Callowa, San Pablo's first Hispanic city clerk and first Hispanic woman City Council member;

Hon. John Marquez, the first Hispanic Richmond City Council member; and myself, the first Hispanic woman Richmond City Council member and the first Hispanic and first woman on the Contra Costa Community College District Governing Board; Hon. Maria Alegria, the first Hispanic woman Pinole City Council member; and Hon. Peter Cantu, the first Hispanic board member of the Richmond Unified School District.

From 1969 to 1990, I had the privilege of working with these college presidents: Dr. Mario Pezzola, on the negotiation of the Chicano Studies Department and Cinco de Mayo community festival; Dr. Bob Wynne, on the implementation of the Chicano Studies Department and the creation of the off-campus Bilingual Tutorial Project and community ESL classes; former President Dr. H. Rex Craig, on the Curriculum Committee study of vocational education programs of the college, and appointed to the Hispanic Advisory Committee, which was part of the court-ordered consent decree; and Dr. Candy Rose, on my appointment to serve on the Hispanic Advisory Committee, with responsibility for oversight of the consent decree.

I also worked as a part-time staff member for the Summer Readiness Program under Dr. Leroy Mims and taught briefly in the Chicano Studies Department during the Robert Wynne and H. Rex Craig years at CCC. During the Dr. Rose years, I served as a consultant, and advocated for the development of the Metas program, a mentoring project at the college that linked Hispanic middle school and high school students with adults working as professionals in careers of student interest. I worked with the Hispanic Advisory Committee of the Richmond Unified School District to recruit students on campus and mentors to work with students. We succeeded in organizing and training 90 Hispanic volunteers, who served 120 at-risk children in the program. I served as a volunteer and then mentor from 1984 until 1990.

During the budget crisis and bankruptcy of the Richmond Unified School District, the financial cuts had an impact on all community services and relationships with programs like Metas. Under the direction of Frank Hernandez, we restructured the Metas program to preserve it by relocating services from the K–12 school sites to the college campus. The Metas students created the Study Buddy program with the motto, “Each one, teach

one.” College volunteer tutors have continued to serve approximately 150 elementary, middle, and high school students each year.

Metas students who have gone on to college have returned to continue the next generation of leadership with the project, which is directed by a former Metas student, Dr. Myra Padilla. She hopes the college will apply for Title V funds in 2009–2010 to expand the project to preschool participants, thus creating a new college training and student participation program.

Working in the State Assembly

FROM 1986–96, my relationship with the college shifted when I went to work for Assemblymember Robert Campbell, an Hispanic alumnus of Contra Costa College. He represented West, Central, and much of East Contra Costa County and chaired the Education Budget Committee, Sub 2 of Ways and Means, which is responsible for approving the entire state education budget for preschool through higher education. The budget and legislative requests from the District and all K–12 districts in the county were often supported and managed through his legislative office.

Among the special memories I have of working on District issues as a member of Assemblyman Campbell’s staff are the following:

- A request for state funding for the new Music Building at Los Medanos College.
- Campbell’s coauthoring of the middle college legislation that selected Contra Costa College as the site for one of three experimental middle college programs in the state. I can fairly say this proposal didn’t have initial support from the college faculty. The concept of running a concurrently enrolled high school on a community college campus did not appeal to either system. There were growing pains, but over time it became an important asset of the college, the school district, and the community. It has been an outstanding alternative high school model, with every student last year passing the California High School Exit Exam. Plus, over the past decade, it has had the highest API scores of most secondary schools in the District.

- The fights against increased tuition hikes were won some years, but this story is about a loss. When I was the president of the District Governing Board, the Board voted to send a letter opposing tuition hikes and to inform the legislature’s Budget chair, Assemblyman Campbell, of our position. I signed the letter of opposition and spoke out against fee hikes. But the chair of Ways and Means, Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, had agreed to a compromise on fees with Speaker Willie Brown for the budget deficit, and Campbell’s job was to implement it in Sub 2, Education Budget Committee. I actually gave Campbell my resignation, if he needed it, because I had opposed him in the legislature. He only laughed and said, “Maria, forget it. Each of us has our job to do.”
- A state budget practice during deficit years to reduce the number of seats in four-year educational institutions that cost more and to “load” students in two-year seats that cost less, followed by the battle for adequate funding for local enrollment impact.
- The Prop 98 funding split discussions between K–12 and the community colleges; the early state fights cannot be placed in print.

I believed in establishing a balance of mission between college transfers to four-year institutions and vocational education. I came to the Governing Board with a working agenda in mind.

In 1989, I declared my intention to run for the District Governing Board, arriving full circle in the journey I had started as a student in 1969. I was still an advocate for educational access for those most at risk and viewed the community college as an institution that served as a bridge for equity in our society. I believed in establishing a balance of mission between college transfers to four-year institutions and vocational education. I came to the Governing Board with a working agenda in mind:

- allocate funding for basic functions every college needs, regardless of size, without taking funds from the instruction bucket;

- create special needs student categorical funding at all colleges for outreach and support of students at risk;
- establish a multicultural diversity requirement, like that in the UC system, for graduation;
- seek opportunities for collaboration and funding for vocational education; and
- support K–12 outreach and successful matriculation.

Member of the Governing Board

IN 1990, I WAS ELECTED to the District Governing Board, the first woman and Hispanic and probably one of the first former students to serve on that governing body. I served on the Board through 1994.

There were issues that arose during my tenure as a Board member that I did not expect, but I soon became actively involved in them. These included:

- Establishing and keeping funding each year for the unfunded liabilities for retirees' health care benefits, with \$2 million set aside and invested the first year, and \$16 million in the general fund reserve toward an unfunded obligation of \$30 million by the time I left the Board. However, I could not get the Governing Board to consider making this a separate categorical or independent trustee fund. I deeply regret that lack of success, but I understood the others wanted the flexibility to keep in the General Fund interest earnings and control of the funds. Unfortunately, this meant it could be withdrawn.
- As president of the Board, advocating with the County Board of Supervisors to amend its general plan and zoning designations to include public/educational space in a project area for securing land designations for the future building of a new campus in East County.
- Advocating for a year to amend a bill that tried to stop community colleges and K–12 districts all over the state from obtaining redevelopment funding for facilities.

- After the bankruptcy of the Richmond Unified School District, facilitating Richmond students' ability to complete their course requirements for college transfer, enabling these students going to Contra Costa College to complete their academic plans.

From 1996 to 2009, my relationship and activity with the District evolved once again. During the late 1990s, I honored Dr. Helen Benjamin's request to support the college bond measure twice with resolutions to the Richmond City Council. The last measure was approved by the council with a unanimous vote, and most members worked actively to get the voters to pass the measure in our region. I was pleased to be a part of the 2008 ribbon cutting for the opening of the Student Services Building and felt great pride in the success of the District's bond measure.

Dr. Benjamin also sought support for a business incubator project with private sector collaboration to be located on the CCC campus. I took this to the Richmond City Council in the hope of receiving \$2 million dollars funding, and I called council members in other cities to get regional funding support. The project was approved, but a year and a half later, the appropriation could not be provided because of Richmond's budget crisis. The saving grace is a smaller version of the incubator project is projected for funding in 2009–10 in the San Pablo-Richmond corridor.

Since 2002, CCC President McKinley Williams has served on the Richmond Children's Foundation Board that funds the development of an alternative preschool and elementary charter program for at-risk youth, which is housed at Nystrom School in southside Richmond. I have collaborated with the Board to support this effort by obtaining funding from the City of Richmond for historic restoration of the school site and trail improvements. We have also sought local and federal funding for rehabilitation of the community center that serves the children and families of the neighborhood. It has been a multi-agency collaboration that continues to improve the quality of life in southside Richmond. In April 2009, the City Council voted for funding to restore the affordable housing stock at Nystrom Village, which surrounds the school, and at that time was close to selecting the development team. It has been an energetic project and I have enjoyed supporting

President Williams's vision to bring quality educational programs to our local neighborhoods.

How could anyone not recognize the value of educational leadership the Contra Costa Community College District has provided across this county? In my own area of West County, Contra Costa College has stood as a beacon of strength, diversity, and equity—like the Statute of Liberty, holding the torch beside the golden door of American opportunity.

Congratulations to all celebrating the 60th anniversary of the District, which has so generously served our community by providing educational access and meaningfully supporting the dreams of the young, and the young at heart. I am proud of the District's 60 years, and I am proud to have shared a small part in this great endeavor.

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CHAPTER



Former president, Candy Rose (at left) of Contra Costa College; past Governing Board member Reverend Lloyd Farr; and former president, Phyllis Peterson of Diablo Valley College

Diversity at the Top: Celebrating Those Who Led the Way

Helen Benjamin, Ph.D.

The current head of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) is the first woman and person of color to be named permanent chancellor of the District. The previous six occupants of the office had been white males. In this account, Dr. Helen Benjamin pays tribute to some of those who led the way to the remarkable diversity in the leadership positions in our education community. As with all significant social change, the people who made the first incremental steps are the true pioneers. This commitment to diversity, which has resulted in such an amazing shift in

leadership over time, will continue to drive positive change across the District and help bring about changes in attitudes throughout society.

IN THIS TENTH YEAR of the 21st century, the Governing Board of the Contra Costa Community College District (District) and senior-level leadership are more diverse than they have been in the 60-year history of the District, reflecting the ethnic and gender diversity of the community we serve. The five-member Governing Board includes two women (Sheila Grilli and Tomi Van de Brooke), two men of color (Jess Reyes and Dr. Tony Gordon), and John Nejedly. The presidents of the colleges (Peter García of Los Medanos College, McKinley Williams of Contra Costa College, and Dr. Judy Walters of Diablo Valley College) also reflect broadening gender and ethnic diversity. A woman of color, I am beginning my fifth year as chancellor. These facts are highly significant when one considers that every Governing Board member, superintendent, chancellor, and college president was white and male from 1949 to 1973. Credit for this change goes to the members of the Governing Board and senior leadership for their demonstrated commitment to diversity.

1970S

THE PATTERN OF GREATER ETHNIC and gender diversity did not begin to emerge in the District until the decade of the 1980s, but had its impetus in the 1970s.

In the early seventies, our District, like many in the nation, changed its name from Contra Costa Junior College District to Contra Costa Community College District. This seemingly small revision redirected the emphasis of the institution and forced it to become even more intertwined with its community. Leadership of the District was primarily white and male from its inception in 1948 until 1973, when Reverend Lloyd Farr won a seat on the Governing Board as the representative for Ward 1 (covering El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Richmond and San Pablo), the most diverse area in our county. Farr brought a new voice to the Governing Board, although it would be

another 11 years before additional diverse voices would be heard at the college leadership level.

1980s

IN 1984, 35 YEARS AFTER the founding of the District, two women, Dr. Phyllis Wiedman (Peterson) and Dr. D. Candy Rose, were selected by the Governing Board to serve as president at Diablo Valley College (DVC) and Contra Costa College (CCC), respectively, under the chancellorship of Dr. Harry Buttimer. As had been the case with Lloyd Farr, their appointments were historic. Both women were very strong advocates for their colleges. This writer was fortunate to serve on the Chancellor's Cabinet with them during the Robert Jensen (1991-95) and Spence (1996-2004) chancellorships.

A mix of excitement and apprehension greeted Phyllis Peterson when she arrived at DVC. Most women at the college welcomed Peterson with delight, while some men were resistant, defiant, even hostile to her hiring. But with her counseling background and inclusive, collaborative style, she quickly won converts and spread an awareness of the value of diversity. She supported the hiring of large numbers of female faculty and staff and led improvements in ethnic hiring. She was a role model and mentor for many women, encouraging them to seek leadership roles at DVC and the District level. Peterson had broad-based experience in both instruction and student services, and she insisted on constituency-based discussions and buy-in whenever major decisions were considered. DVC thrived during her 12-year presidency.

Candy Rose dazzled West Contra Costa County when she applied for the presidency of CCC. As the college's first woman and youngest ever president, she brought excitement, passion, and an assertive, why-not attitude to her position. An accomplished speaker and seasoned teacher and

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administrator, she consciously broke from the traditional mentality of the times, endearing her to many. Rose thrived on innovation and thinking outside the box—offering telecourses through the campus television channel, KCCC-TV, for example. Ever encouraging of her faculty and staff, she once roller-skated on stage in a cheerleading costume to rally the troops at an All College Day, an image that many remembered for years. Although her tenure came to a controversial end in 1998, Rose’s legacy is still evident at CCC through the governance structure and practices that she established during her time at the college.

Clare Luiselli

THE APPOINTMENT OF PETERSON AND ROSE by the Governing Board was a clear indication that things were changing, and others with different voices would be given an opportunity for senior-level leadership positions in the future. Prior to the appointment of these two trailblazers, women had served only in director and dean positions, the first being Phebe Ward as director of general education for the District in 1950. The second was Clare Luiselli, whose career spanned 37 ½ years, beginning at DVC in 1954. In 1965, when Karl Drexel became superintendent, he assigned Luiselli to manage the finance area. In July 1972, she was appointed District fiscal services officer, with a title change in 1980 to District business manager. In April 1985, she elected to resign her District position to return to a college campus, this time LMC, as the director of business services. She returned to the District Office in January 1990 as the special assistant to the chancellor under Jack Carhart and as associate chancellor under Bob Jensen in July 1990. Leaders came and went, but Luiselli remained, providing stability, leadership and mentoring for four chancellors: Karl Drexel, Harry Buttimer, Jack Carhart, and Bob Jensen. Her many years of work and dedication to the District, especially in the area of finance, enabled it to remain solvent through difficult times.

1990s

THE 1990S BROUGHT even more diversity in District leadership, resulting in the addition of new and distinct voices. In 1990, Board member Lloyd Farr chose not to seek re-election and was replaced by Maria Viramontes. With her election, the Board had its first woman who was also a member of the Latino community. Her rich experiences and contributions are shared elsewhere in this volume.

In 1991, the Governing Board, under the chancellorship of Jack Carhart, hired Stan Chin to lead Los Medanos College. An Asian American, Chin had been a chemistry instructor and dean at the college. Bright, articulate, and sincerely devoted to the success of every student, he served with distinction until 1995, when he became terminally ill. During his tenure, he championed the need for LMC to begin planning for new facilities, and he introduced the first ethnic studies courses at the college.

With the retirement of Jack Carhart in 1991, Martinez native Robert Jensen became chancellor. He created senior-level vice chancellor positions in finance, educational services and human resources—to the consternation of many. His selection of Dr. Jack Miyamoto for the human resources position, and me for the educational services position, increased the numbers and the diversity of the senior management team for the District.

In 1996, Charles Spence followed Robert Jensen as chancellor. He selected the District's first Latino college president, Raul Rodriguez, as the fifth permanent president of LMC and the first person to be selected from outside the District to head the college. Rodriguez's perspective as a new-

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comer to the college and the area brought a new strategic vision. His push for growth and change, along with his status as an outsider, created both tensions and opportunities. His accomplishments include mobilizing facilities planning, reorganizing the college's original management structure, and opening the college's first outreach center in Brentwood. In 1999, Dr. Spence selected me as the ninth permanent president of Contra Costa College and the first African American to be appointed college president in the District. The tenures of Peterson, Rose, and Chin ended in the 1990s, but the District's commitment to diversity in its leadership continued with the selection of their replacements.

2000S

IN THE NEW DECADE, leadership continued to grow more diverse with several key appointments. Chancellor Spence hired Phyllis Gilliland as vice chancellor in the planning area; she later served a four-month stint as acting chancellor. Mojdeh Medizadeh served as vice chancellor in information technology. Peter García replaced outgoing LMC President Rodriguez in 2003. In 2004, Jo Ann Cookman, a former classified employee at LMC, was elected to represent Ward V (covering Antioch, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Knightsen, Oakley, and Pittsburg), making her the third woman to serve on the Governing Board. In August 2005, the Governing Board selected me as the seventh permanent chancellor and first woman for the position in the 57-year history of the District. McKinley Williams, after serving as interim president for a year, was selected as permanent president of CCC in 2006. Also in 2006, after serving at the college for more than 30 years, Diane Scott-Summers was appointed interim president at DVC for 15 months, upon the retirement of Dr. Mark Edelstein. She had been the first female division chair and the first female vice president of the college. In addition, in 2009, Kindred Murillo and Dr. Deborah Blue serve as vice chancellors for administrative services and educational services, respectively.

Three Special Women

THIS PIECE IS NOT COMPLETE without mentioning the three women who served as secretaries to the Governing Board and the chancellor for the first 50 years of the District. They, of course, were not classified as managers but engaged in activities that ensured effective leadership. Their support of the chancellors and the Governing Board members provided continuity in many ways.

1949-1969

Isabel Sargeant

Superintendent's Secretary

1969-1980

Doris Peck

Superintendent's Secretary

1980-2004

Jean Courtney

Chancellor's Secretary/Administrative Assistant/Executive Coordinator

Going Forward

AS WE END THE FIRST DECADE of the 21st century, the District is well positioned to continue demonstrating its commitment to diversity in its many forms. When the District was established in 1948, the county population was around 200,000; today, it is over one million. When the District was established, we had fewer than a thousand students; today, we have more than 60,000. Our students speak more than 60 languages, and 62 percent of them are of color. Without a formal strategy or directive, we have succeeded in reflecting the ethnic and gender diversity of our population at the Governing Board and senior leadership levels over the last 36 years. It is my hope that we continue to do so in all parts of our organization.

This piece includes contributions by Barbara Allcox, Linda Cerruti, Linda Cherry, Peter García, Tim Leong, Sandi McCray, Dr. Diane Scott-Summers, and McKinley Williams.

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C H A P T E R



Terry Armstrong (at right) of Diablo Valley College in the early 1990s with Isamu, a student with disabilities from Japan.

Breaking Barriers: The Program for Students with Disabilities at Diablo Valley College

Students with disabilities have often turned to their local community colleges due to the accessibility and flexibility of offerings. These students were greatly aided by the passage of federal legislation and the implementation of special programs at local campuses. Two former directors of the Disabled Student Services program at Diablo Valley College (DVC) share the story of how they met the challenges of creating a successful program while at the same time constantly expanding the definition of the students they would serve and what services they would provide.

MARIANNE GOODSON: THE BEGINNING AND TRANSITION YEARS

THE PASSAGE OF THE REHABILITATION ACT of 1973 was landmark legislation in the United States which, among other things, for the first time protected the access and participation rights of persons with disabilities in public colleges and universities. Section 504 of the act states: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall . . . solely by reason of her or his disability, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity *receiving Federal financial assistance*. . . .” Indeed, it was the threats of lost federal financial aid and federal vocational monies that were the booster rockets propelling colleges and universities to establish the first student services programs designed to ensure access for and serve students with disabilities.

Since its inception in 1974, DVC’s various iterations of programs to serve students with disabilities (e.g., Enabler Office, Disabled Student Programs & Services, Disability Support Services) has grown to serve more than 1,400 students with disabilities each year.

Assisting Students in the Early Days

AS THE REHABILITATION ACT was making its way through Congress, this writer was planting the first seeds of what would eventually grow into one of the most comprehensive, effective, and well respected programs for students with disabilities. From April through fall semester 1973, I was employed as a classified, hourly employee to provide assistance to the blind students who were attending the college. I provided orientation and mobility services to help students traverse a complex and physically challenging campus, provided test-taking assistance as a reader and scribe, and worked individually with blind students seeking to transfer to San Francisco State.

In February 1974, I was hired full time to serve as the “placement officer of the handicapped and disadvantaged students,” helping students with disabilities to find employment. Toward the end of my first semester, I realized that the college needed to provide more support to the students with

whom I worked. When I met with the president, dean of students, and director of special programs in my end-of-term meeting, we discussed and established my vision for the college to formalize services for students with disabilities.

During fall semester 1974, I was hired as the full-time, permanent “enabler”—a term that, at the time, innocently meant “a person who enabled programmatic and architectural access to a college and its programs.” This term subsequently became used with the negative connotation of “supporter of the alcohol or drug addiction of another person” and was quickly discarded across most of the country.

My position was to provide services on campus for disabled students to help them succeed in the academic environment. We provided services to students with all disabilities, including the group known then as “neurologically handicapped,” which later became known as “learning disabled.” I worked with Ruth Fielding at Recordings for the Blind (RFB). Our advocacy for the students led to RFB expanding its service beyond persons who were blind to include persons with learning disabilities—a practice that is commonplace today nationwide.

DVC was one of the first colleges to have an enabler and, as a result, I became involved with a statewide group that worked with the state chancellor’s office to help set up the standards and definitions of disabilities used in acquiring funding. Eventually, in the mid-1980s, this position became a certificated management position overseeing Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS).

As head of the program (and its sole employee), I conducted the first accessibility studies on the campus, as required by law, and we made adaptations and modifications as a result. I hired Deborah Burbridge (later Silvey) as the learning improvement facilitator in February 1976. She ran the Learning Center for all students, including the “neurologically handi-

During fall semester 1974, I was hired as the full-time, permanent “enabler”—a term that, at the time, innocently meant “a person who enabled programmatic and architectural access to a college and its programs.”
—Marianne Goodson

capped” students. The Learning Disabled Program started around 1978 when Silvey saw the need and began focusing more on services for students with learning disabilities. By 1980, Silvey was working only with those students.

In November 1987, we hired Kathleen Costa on a part-time basis to assist Silvey in DSPS. Until this time, the program consisted of me, Silvey, and Anne Long, a learning specialist who started specialized tutoring by hiring a few tutors—most notably Linda Moschell and Linda Leck—who continue their work today. Costa became a part-time counselor for the program in 1988. In fall 1990, she was hired as the first full-time counselor for DSPS. After 15 years building the program, I took on a new assignment as a general DVC counselor in 1988.

Jan Umbreit was hired in fall 1988 to take the DSPS program reins. She brought energy and a new vigor to the program and made what has turned out to be one of the most important hires in the history of DSPS—Susan Garcia. Initially hired as an hourly senior office assistant, and eventually as a permanent employee, Garcia brought with her significant management experience she had gained at Pacific Bell. She had taken an early retirement from the corporate world to pursue employment that brought her more personal satisfaction. Garcia has been a mainstay through growth and development of the program at DVC, and now through three of the four managers in the history of the program. She has been invaluable, working alongside a series of managers in setting up the program infrastructure, as well as program policies and procedures for staff support, services, and student intake. Today, she remains “the rock” of the program.

Once she was hired, Umbreit immediately connected with her peers at Contra Costa College (CCC) and Los Medanos College (LMC)—Terry Armstrong and Stan Chin, respectively. The three met monthly for the first year to share ideas and practices that would enhance the services offered at the colleges, and to set up structures to increase their contacts and relationships with high school special education programs within their communities. At the time Umbreit was hired, CCC DSPS served approximately twice the number of students served at DVC. Early in Umbreit’s tenure, Armstrong and Chin developed a joint presentation to the Board on the colleges’ DSPS programs, during which the number of students served

by each college was projected onto the sixth floor Board Room wall. The numbers prompted Board member Eugene Ross to ask, “Why in the world would CCC have twice the number of handicapped students, when DVC has three times the number of students overall?” DVC at that moment in time served approximately 160 students.

Reaching Out: “High School Day”

THOUGH EUGENE ROSS WAS NOT AWARE AT THE TIME, Umbreit and her staff had already begun work on the design of one of the most significant recruiting efforts of any student service program in the history of DVC. It focused on increased communications and a day of programming for high school “resource” students with visiting education instructors—an effort that continued to grow through Armstrong’s tenure and continues to this day under the direction of Stacey Shears. The effort has gradually morphed over the years, but remains as wildly popular with students and instructors as Umbreit’s first “high school day.” It has led to continuous increases of students with disabilities accessing education at DVC and many succeeding with certificates, degrees, and transfers.

On that first high school day, and at ensuing events, all local high school students in resource classes and their instructors were invited to DVC to spend the day learning about the college, its academic and career programs, as well as services provided by DSPS. The program culminated with a visit through the various career and technical programs or a cooking demonstration (pre-Emeril) from one of the Culinary Arts Program chefs in the demonstration room, complete with delicious samples. The students and resource instructors always raved about these events. This effort expanded to include two days of more than 100 visitors through Armstrong’s tenure and has now effectively morphed under Shears’ leadership into a day in which students complete the DVC application, take the college assessment tests, and sign up for a specialized DSS orientation and advising sessions.

Umbreit also had a tremendously positive impact on the college and how employees viewed students with disabilities. Her friendly and assertive style was highly valued and respected by her college and District colleagues, and

paved the way for significant improvements in both educational programming and architectural access.

On one occasion, Umbreit contacted Armstrong at CCC, just as the state was exploring a funding enhancement that would allow DSPS programs at colleges to claim “student count” money for serving students with psychiatric disabilities. Both she and Armstrong favored this new development, as their programs were serving students with such psychiatric disabilities, as per Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, but weren’t funded for those efforts by the chancellor’s office. She invited Armstrong to lunch in the Norseman with a DVC administrator who was opposed to this development due to fear of a tidal wave of “crazies” stepping foot on campus. After a long discussion of the nature of psychiatric disabilities, including such common conditions as depression and panic disorders—and the statistical fact that persons with such disorders tend to be less violent than their non-disabled peers—the administrator relented and embraced the inevitable. Score “one” for the “gang-tackle.”

TERRY ARMSTRONG: THE DEVELOPMENT AND RENAISSANCE ERAS

AS NOTED, THIS WRITER’S CAREER BEGAN in the Contra Costa Community College District (District) as a DSPS supervisor/coordinator at Contra Costa College, where I developed strong relationships with both Marianne Goodson and her husband Pete Goodson. They were both my mentors in the new world of California Community College DSPS and Title V. On a summer afternoon in 1990, Jan Umbreit called me at CCC and informed me that the lure of Puget Sound was calling her. She had turned in her resignation at DVC and would be moving to Seattle to work at Seattle Central Community College and to windsurf the Sound. She urged me to apply for the position at DVC.

My first day on the DVC campus, in February 1991, was during the time Diane Scott-Summers was on sabbatical finishing her doctorate, and Dan Martin had his first stint as the dean of student services. The first of several offices for DSPS, over the next few years, was in the Techni-

cal Education Building next to Sue Garcia in the two glass offices lodged between the Dental Technology and Dental Hygiene programs. DSPS, at that time, consisted of two offices: Kathleen Costa in the Counseling Center; and the two learning specialists, Anne Long and Deborah Silvey, plus the newly hired learning disability assessment specialist, Catherine Jester, in the Learning Center, along with a few part-time faculty and staff to serve just under 400 students. Later, a key position, the high tech center specialist (Melinda Moreno) was added to fulfill the three-fold mission of (1) teaching students the state-of-the-art adaptive computer technology; (2) ensuring that students knew how to utilize word processing software with spell check and grammar check; and (3) providing cognitive retraining for students who had suffered head injuries. Melinda was a leader and entrepreneur in the field and was very effective in advising me on the latest hardware and software needed to maintain “state-of-the-art” currency.

Upon my arrival to DVC, I adopted two large projects from the planning efforts of Umbreit and her staff: the Architectural Barrier Removal (ABR) project and the consolidation of DSPS staff (other than Kathleen Costa) into what would become the remodeled Learning Center. One of my first goals was to take a closer look at the ABR project to ensure that, after project completion, students with mobility-related disabilities would have an accessible route from the bus stop to the Physical and Life Science buildings. It was during this project that the elevator located outside of the Information Center for the Student Services Center Building (formerly the Business Education Building) was built. This elevator, along with a well-designed route of travel from the Learning Center to the Life Sciences Building—envisioned by Guy Grace—were the

This elevator, along with a well-designed route of travel from the Learning Center to the Life Sciences Building—envisioned by Guy Grace—were the keystones of the project that realized my vision of an architecturally accessible route from the bottom to almost the very top of the campus. —Terry Armstrong

keystones of the project that realized my vision of an architecturally accessible route from the bottom to almost the very top of the campus. There were not enough funds to address the remaining barrier, which was the circular route to the SC buildings and the Observatory—a barrier that remains to this day. In a management meeting, just after the elevator was built and in operating order, the president, Dr. Phyllis Peterson, lamented that the elevator was an eyesore on the campus. I disagreed. DSPS employees and all the students using wheelchairs, crutches, scooters, and canes thought it was the most beautiful sight on the campus.

Upon being hired, I also immediately began working with Sue Garcia and staff to review service policies, procedures, practices, and forms in order to ensure consistency with statewide best practices. During my first few years, we developed the testing accommodations, as well as other service policies, procedures, and forms. We also forged alliances with other service areas, since DSPS had no space to provide services. We developed first editions of student and faculty handbooks and began making broad efforts to increase communication directly with faculty. The original design of the student handbook, which I had adapted from Oregon State University's while at CCC, was used as the base model. Anne Long and Kathleen Costa took lead roles in adapting it for use at DVC. It was considered a statewide best practice, and was sent via "floppy disk" to dozens of colleges throughout the state and country.

A significant development in the history of the "disability movement" occurred when President George H. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The landmark legislation had three main effects:

1. for public universities and colleges, it reaffirmed the 1973 Rehabilitation Act mandating both programmatic (college courses and services) and architectural accessibility and required two major projects: the Self Evaluation and the "Transition Plan";
2. mandated program and architectural access at private colleges and universities, which were previously not obligated under the Rehabilitation Act; and

3. allowed students to sue the college and/or its employees for monetary damages if they believe that their civil rights are violated relative to access to education.

Relative to the Transition Plan, the decision at the District level was that the DSPS and buildings and grounds managers would conduct a comprehensive and thorough audit of the colleges' facilities. A laptop and specialized software for the study were purchased, and Guy Grace and I became joined at the hip for six months at an average of 15 hours per week to complete the audit.

The new right of students to hold the college and its employees personally liable for violating their civil rights ultimately led to a new role for DSPS employees. We now were not only responsible for ensuring the access of students with disabilities to the educational setting, we also became advocates for the college employees to advise in such a way that they wouldn't inadvertently violate the ADA-guaranteed rights of students. We soon realized that what initially appeared to be a conflict to both support the students and the college's employees, actually was not. In advocating for a student's access to a course, program, or physical location, DSPS simultaneously protected the college and its employees from overt or inadvertent discrimination.

As the number of students with disabilities continued to grow during my tenure, DSPS was able to significantly expand its staff. I hired Nancy Deason, the former DSS coordinator at Stanford University, to be our new learning disability specialist replacing Anne Long, when she retired. In addition, three new DSPS-specific classified positions were developed, which today are filled by mobility and access specialist, Laurence Orme; testing accommodations coordinator, Ron Tenty; alternate media specialist, Rose Desmond; and note taking coordinator, Lisa Martin. Finally, in 2002, a new DSPS counselor, Stacey Shears, was hired to replace Kathleen Costa, who like Goodson, moved out of DSPS and into the Counseling Department. The direct service providers have also been profoundly important to DSPS's success—the numerous instructional assistants (tutors), ASL interpreters, instructional aides, and student employees who have been dedicated to the access and success of students with disabilities at DVC.

In 2002, I accepted the offer to become dean of counseling and student support services, which left the DSPS manager position vacant. While it remained vacant for five years, during a tumultuous time in DVC's history where hiring a manager wasn't "in the cards," Stacey Shears stepped up in 2006 and became a temporary faculty coordinator while I technically remained as program manager. During this time, Shears took it upon herself to become American Sign Language (ASL) literate to work with students who were deaf, something I had done as DSPS manager and found very important in serving the hearing impaired community. In addition, we spent many hours together so she could learn the various aspects and complexities of developing and managing a million-dollar-plus budget, doing MIS tracking, and completing the state reporting required while overseeing and maintaining day-to-day program operations.

In 2007, Shears was hired as the fourth manager of what had become Disability Support Services (DSS). Early in her tenure, she was presented with many challenges: managing a building move that merged most DSS functions into the Student Services Center building; revamping ASL interpreter services to accommodate a growing population of students who are deaf; helping DSS staff cope with the tragic and violent death of a DSS tutor; and spearheading the hiring of two new and energetic DSS counselors, Kellie Conde at the Pleasant Hill campus and Tedmund Munoz at the San Ramon campus.

What is clear from the history of DSS is that DVC has been very effective in hiring highly professional and committed DSS personnel at all levels, to provide outstanding services to students and to the college community. The torch has now passed to Stacey Shears, entrusted with maintaining the passion, the commitment, and the innovation that will ensure the best possible services for students with disabilities at DVC.

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CHAPTER



Members of the first International Club at
West Contra Costa Junior College, circa 1951

Of Tennis, Earthquakes, and Dreams at Contra Costa: How a College Grows More Inclusive

Bob Martincich

This remarkable reflection touches upon many concerns found in the daily operation of a vital, changing institution, but more importantly, it examines the way a college evolves over many years. The experience of Contra Costa College (CCC) during the turbulent years Bob Martincich was its dean of instruction is mirrored by what happened at the other two colleges, with different players and different dynamics. His meditation on the real purpose of meetings in the academy should be required reading for all who might otherwise despair of ever making progress.

MY FIRST EMPLOYMENT at the Contra Costa Community College District (District) in 1957 was as an English teacher at Diablo Valley College (DVC). I stayed there for about 15 years, mainly in the job for which I was hired. Toward the end of that period, however, I served in two other one-year assignments that led to my equally long tenure at Contra Costa College (CCC) as its dean of instruction.

The first of those interim appointments was in the early 1970s as a replacement for Verle Hendstrand, DVC's dean of student services, who took a one-year sabbatical. In the course of my new duties, I served on one or two District Office committees, and through that service established a positive professional relationship with Bob Wynne, president of Contra Costa College. At the end of my replacement year, I went back to teaching English. A year later, in 1975, Bob Wynne had occasion to make a year-long interim appointment to the office of dean of students at Contra Costa College. He asked me to take the job, which I did. At the end of a year of rich and varied experience at CCC, I again returned to DVC and my English classes.

When the permanent CCC dean of instruction position opened in 1977, my generally positive experiences at that campus made me a competitive candidate for the position. I applied and was ultimately hired, entering the second half of a very full and happy career in education. From the start of that second half, I was aware of how fortunate I was to be associated with a District that gave its employees the chance to accumulate the wide range of professional experiences that had come my way. I was aware, as I began my new job at CCC, how that range of experiences put me in a good position to participate productively in the dynamics of an institution that was being moved by local and broader historical forces toward a new image of itself.

What I Became Part of

CCC WAS CHANGING. The change was a sharply defined instance of a more general change marked by the use of the term "community college" in place of "junior college" in naming the colleges throughout the state system. When I got there, CCC had been, in more ways than one, the closest

of the District's three colleges to the University of California at Berkeley. By happenstance, it was close geographically, but by purpose, it was close in institutional structure. Discipline-based departments were the primary organizational units. Department chairs were very powerful organizational players. Seniority determined instructional assignments and teaching schedules. The curriculum favored large lecture classes and the pedagogical skills suited to teaching those classes were highly prized. And though the vocational offerings at CCC were always very strong, the so-called "academic" side of the curriculum, the transfer function of the college, was assigned the higher honor.

For a decade and longer, the college was rightfully proud of a core faculty that held popular sway in traditional undergraduate lecture courses in anthropology, art appreciation, economics and business, psychology, literature, music appreciation, and philosophy. This offering was matched in breadth by a full range of lower-division science and math courses staffed by an equally strong faculty who fully understood and supported the expectations of academic rigor. These expectations were embedded in the articulation agreements that made the college's courses acceptable as lower-division equivalents at four-year colleges across the nation.

When I took office at CCC, this traditional university model, which the college emulated and against which it measured its accomplishments and reputation, had begun to fall short—not necessarily from any flaw in the model, but because the college's constituencies were changing with the times. In particular, the ethnic communities within those constituencies had been finding voice, the voice promised them by Lyndon Johnson's New Society legislative initiatives, and the voice demonstrated to them in the power of its use by the likes of Mario Savio, a passionate leader of the Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley. Among much else, that voice had begun to soften in its support for an academic curriculum based on the cultural traditions of Western Europe and presented by means of a pedagogy rooted in the same sources.

When, as dean of instruction, I accepted responsibility for the CCC curriculum, it had recently been expanded within two newly created departments: Black Studies and Chicano Studies. The ramifications of that expansion persisted—though with decreasing intensity and less frequent

conflict—until I retired in 1990. It probably still retains some remnants of its transformative force even today. In creating those two departments (as well as Native American and Women’s Studies programs), the college signaled the beginnings of an acquiescence to the logic and power of this new voice. It was saying: “we want our own history, art, music, and more taught separately from, but parallel to, the traditional curriculum, and we want it taught through a pedagogy that better fits the learning ways of the students for whom that curriculum is being brought forth.” That voice sounded betrayal and doom for some at the college, while for others it was the sound of hope achieved. And so I began my work.

A Preliminary Event (a Tennis Match)

DURING THE SUMMER preceding my first semester as dean of instruction at CCC, Leroy Mims, dean of student services, asked me to be his doubles partner in a tennis match open to all faculty and staff. He knew that I played the game, and I knew that he played it well. I agreed, we entered the tour-

This small event was a source of strength to me—and, I believe, to Leroy—throughout our long professional relationship. He being the black dean and I being the white dean, our inevitable professional conflicts were too often made more of than what they were.

namment, and we won. But not easily. We handled the early matches well enough, but as the hot afternoon wore on, I began to flag. Our opponents for the final match, which would determine the tournament doubles championship, were a young college counselor and a younger student. I was older to start with and rapidly got much older as play progressed. My legs were leaden, my feet hurt, my mind wandered. I felt ready to quit. Then Leroy stepped in. He did what good coaches do. With a few soft words that somehow overwhelmed the contrary evidence that my limbs were screaming at me, he convinced me that I had it in me not only to keep on playing, but to keep on playing well enough to beat

the guys across the net from us. And so we won the match and the tournament and were each rewarded with a small plastic trophy with both of our names on it.

This small event was a source of strength to me—and, I believe, to Leroy—throughout our long professional relationship. He being the black dean and I being the white dean, our inevitable professional conflicts were too often made more of than what they were. Both of us kept the small trophies we had won among the odds and ends on our office shelves. As my experiences at the college accumulated—both good and bad—I came to appreciate that my trophy stood for much more than a victory on the tennis courts.

Another Preliminary Event (the Telling of a Dream)

IT WAS STANDING PRACTICE to open each school year with a full faculty meeting in which the dean of instruction spoke at length about his or her plans and expectations for the immediate future. The night before what was to be my first presentation in my new role as a leader of this professional body, I had a vivid dream. In the days leading up to the meeting I had worked and reworked my speech. I had sat in the audience at such meetings more than enough times to know how unforgiving those audiences could be. I prepared carefully and, I thought, well. But on the morning of the speech I set those preparations aside and decided to tell the dream.

I spoke with only a few rough notes, which was easy to do. The dream was still so vivid in my mind's eye that I simply had to say what I saw: I was among a diverse group of people, all adults, on a steep and rock-strewn hillside. We were climbing up the hill and the going was hard. There was no firm footing. It was common to take one step forward and slide back two. Those who found some firm footing reached back to help someone else on the climb, or reached forward to stop someone else from sliding too far back. Eventually two or three reached the crest and pulled themselves over. Once set, they reached back and pulled others over, and they in turn reached back to help more of us, and soon enough we were all there at the top. It was only then that we all took the time to look around.

From the perspective of this accounting, it is a corny dream, for at the top was a broad meadow of tall grasses and brightly colored flowers wafting gently about in the glistening sunlight by soft and fragrant breezes. People who work hard and cooperatively are rewarded. When the strong help the weak, when the advantaged look out for the less advantaged, when no one rushes forward to claim the mountain top alone but toils with the group so that all can share in the returns of communal toil, the glorious light of those rewards will overwhelm the darkness of that toil. Corny, indeed.

But something happened while I told my dream that stripped the corniness away. I had spoken to audiences of this size on many occasions before, and usually with fair success. Never before, however, had I been able to win the level of rapt attention that was paid to my words as I told the dream. The large room became inordinately quiet. Nobody fidgeted. All eyes fixed on me. Some jaws fell agape. It seemed that no one breathed. Then I finished, and the spell gave way. People began to stir. They looked about, then back at me. Many smiled. I made a few closing remarks and left the podium. The applause was warm and sustained. Later that day, and for days afterward, people sought me out to comment on the dream. And for years after that, in the days running up to the first meeting of the year when the dean of instruction was expected to lay out his plans for the future, people asked if I would be having another dream to tell.

It took me a little while to figure out what had happened during that dream speech. But what I concluded grounded me in the deeper realities of the place where I had come to expend whatever professional talents I had. What I found was that while I stood at that podium believing that I was telling an audience of widely differing souls my dream, in reality I was telling that audience its dream as well. So I realized that, in the future ahead of me at the college, no matter how the issues of the day might drive us apart, I might count on that dream—corny or not—ultimately to hold us together.

Surface Issues and the Ground Below

THE NUMBER OF ISSUES that needed to be addressed during my tenure as dean of instruction at CCC included the following:

- budget and staff cutbacks following the passage of Proposition 13;
- realignment of the relationship between administration and the certificated and classified staffs following the adoption of a collective bargaining agreement;
- introduction of a formal grievance procedure for conflict resolution that came with the collective bargaining agreement;
- state-mandated course certification and assessment and advising procedures structured into a process of student matriculation;
- college-initiated review of its general education offering and the requirements for its degrees;
- District-required program review with the potential effect of program and staff reductions;
- periodic accreditation requirements; and
- administrative reorganization, and the subsequent reapportionment of budget and staff among administrative units. (There were many of these, usually following the appointment of a new college president.)

Each of these issues took enormous amounts of time to address and absorb within the workings of the college. Each required a change or represented an opportunity for change. It was no surprise, therefore, that arguments, often vigorously and extensively pursued, would arise in the course of working through any given issue. But too often, arguments were pursued and positions held well beyond the point where it seemed fruitful or productive to do so. It took me a while to figure out what was going on. In the end, I was helped by the English teacher in me with a trained eye for metaphor.

The Contra Costa College campus is located on the Hayward earthquake fault. Tectonic plates shift beneath it. There is no stopping them, no diverting them. The metaphor I discovered centered upon the image of inexorable subterranean movement. Once it took hold in my imagination, it became easier to sense what all the seemingly tangential and irrational arguments were about. Whatever the issue on an agenda might be, the opportunity for change that it represented opened the way for deeply held but competing views of what the college should be to rumble to the surface. Recognizing that deep perennial antagonism could surface at any time freed

me from any compulsive need to expect a neat logic to govern the complex professional interactions, often extending over long periods of time, that

At best the energies that rumbled up might be nudged toward productive ends, and at least they might be nudged away from destructive ones. That, simply, was the long and the short of it.

were required to respond productively to the myriad and demanding issues of the day. By virtue of my found metaphor, the literal and the figurative had merged. I was riding the tectonic plates that grated constantly at a faultline in the depths below. No way could I expect my office to stop or direct that deep movement. At best the energies that rumbled up might be nudged toward productive ends, and at least they might be nudged away from destructive ones. That, simply, was the long and the short of it.

Passing the Time

WHAT DEANS OF INSTRUCTION did when I was in the job, and certainly what I did at CCC, was attend meetings. By my rough but conservative estimate, I either sat in or conducted 7,000 of them during my 12 years at the college. There were long meetings and short meetings, large meetings and small meetings, formal meetings and informal meetings, friendly meetings and hostile meetings; there were meetings, meetings, meetings. Each was intended to get something done: decide on a course of action, move a project along, respond to an emergent problem. They did serve these intentions, and by and large the intentions were realized. Budgets got apportioned, catalogs got designed, courses got certified, grievances got settled—the day-to-day, year-to-year business of the college got done.

Somewhere along the line it struck me that, over time, something more, something not fully intended or immediately recognized, was also getting done. Here the accomplishment had little to do with a meeting's agenda, or who called it, or when and where it was held. It had mainly to do with the simple fact that meetings always involve people. In my experience in

approximately 7,000 of them, the people gathered in any particular meeting seldom all liked one another, seldom all agreed with one another, and seldom all agreed on the deeper question of what the college should be or could become. The particular issues of the day and the disagreements about them were often what meetings would be about. It was the intention of most meetings to meet the issues and ease the disagreements over them, and most often they succeeded so that the business could move on.

The deeper issue of what the college should be, or was becoming, was rarely the focus of any meeting. That fact should not be surprising, for the real issue was race. And even though it did not show up on the agenda of any of those 7,000 meetings, it was always there grinding away like the tectonic plates that marked the faultline beneath the college.

While no one meeting addressed the issue, all of them did. Over the years, people who harbored sharp and profound disagreements with one another gathered time after time, in one configuration or another, to address the problems of the day. I believe that the simple fact that people repeatedly gathered to get something done accounted, as much as anything, for diminishing the issue of race as a real or potential impediment to the realization of the college's dreams for itself. When I left the college after 12 years, and by no particular action that I take credit for, it had become a more harmonious place, a place more at peace with itself, a place willing to accept what for so long it had been becoming.

Final Meetings and an Anecdote for the End

THE LAST MEETINGS I ATTENDED before retiring from CCC involved hiring my replacement. Let me note that when I first became a dean of instruction there was no one in Northern California who held that job who was not white. That began to change, but very, very slowly. By the time the college set out to find my replacement in 1990, the pool of highly qualified candidates was richly diverse. Through a series of meetings, which included representatives from all segments of the college, five of those candidates were singled out for their excellence and recommended to the college president for a final selection. Included in that number was McKinley Williams, an

African American who was the one selected to be Contra Costa College's new dean of instruction.

My tenure as dean was over, but I was given office space at the college so that I could finish with some odds and ends and also give the new dean any help he might need to settle into his role. I was going about this pleasant business when one day I got a visit from someone whom I will call an old-line faculty member. He was influential and well respected throughout the college, and fiercely loyal to it. My relationship with him over the years had always been friendly and professionally productive. I was glad to see him when he stopped by my out-of-the-way office, and not at all surprised when, characteristically, he got straight to his point. "You recommended Williams for your job, right?" he asked. I answered yes. "Do you really think he will work out to be all right for the college?" he asked further. Again, I answered yes. He considered me carefully for a moment and then said, "Well, he'd better, because if he doesn't, I'm going to go out to the harbor, put a hole in your boat, and sink it." He kept looking at me, and then he smiled. Thus I was given to feel one last rumble from that troubled ground below. But it was muffled and faint. He did smile, and he did leave my boat for my wife and me to fish from for many a happy year.

PART V

Postscripts: Looking Back and Ahead



Solar-power generation systems, installed in 2007 at all three colleges, are projected to produce nearly half the District's peak-summer electricity demand.

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C H A P T E R



Los Medanos College's new Science Building (at left)
and Library (at right)

You Can Go Home Again: A Visit to Los Medanos College

Chet Case

Chet Case was one of those responsible for Los Medanos College (LMC) at its inception. He headed up the Kellogg Program for new faculty members, described elsewhere, and went on to become the second president of the college, serving from 1985 to 1991, following the towering figure of Jack Carhart. Case here reflects on what is abiding about an institution in flux, one that he had not visited for many years.

THE FORCE AND MAGNITUDE OF GROWTH in the Contra Costa Community College District (District) in general and at Los Medanos College in particular were impressed on me when I visited the campus in September 2007, to attend ceremonies celebrating the opening of its new Library building. Nearby, new Math and Science buildings were nearing completion. The college looked altogether different at first, but when I found parking (where I used to park was gone) and went into the Library, familiarity returned, except that everything looked smaller and showed 30 years of use. The interior had been remodeled and space consumed. New stuff, old stuff—yet it was still the same basic structure, a mix of concrete and glass. I leaned over to look down into the four-story well formed by the central square of the building. In it stood the Learning Resource Center, where I and others had once espoused innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction and which was now slated for repurposing.

I met up with Vince Custodio, former dean at Los Medanos and old friend, to attend a brunch reception and the ceremony. The Library structure was new, but heart-liftingly familiar were the enthusiasm, hopes, and aspirations of the people, some of whom I had known and worked with long ago.

Vince and I walked around and felt the past meeting the present. Classes had just ended, and the passageways and corridors were crowded with students headed to their next classes. We chatted with several instructors who had been with the college since it opened. We had lunch in the cafeteria with some of them and got filled in on what had been happening since those early days. New but old. All this growth, all this change, all this sameness, all this difference. Vince and I had stepped aside years ago, but the growth had gone on, in its own direction, with new leadership and new results. Now, as then, growth beget growth. How to round out this mellow experience? We went into the bookstore and I bought a crimson-and-gold T-shirt emblazoned with the college name. I store it carefully and wear it only when I feel reminiscent, so it won't wear out and the color won't fade.

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C H A P T E R



Contra Costa College students in 2009

Looking Ahead to the 75th Anniversary: A Note to Future Historians

Chet Case

In this postscript to the collection, Chet Case shares with us some provocative ideas about what a future history of this remarkable collection of colleges might record.

WANT TO PASS ALONG some thoughts to anyone who might be considering a more thorough history of the Contra Costa Community College District (District). The current effort has hedged its purpose by calling it a “collection of stories,” and, in the interest of manageability, has narrowed

its scope to a few people, places, and events. A well-realized history will go well beyond this kind of highlighting, to brush in color, light and shadow, nuance, imagery, and some solid thinking about cause and effect—and maybe to advance a plausible thesis.

Growth, as a phenomenon and as an organizing armature, might be a good place to begin work on a future history. Early on, the commonsense usage of “growth” would have to be pummeled into a defensible definition. First, it would need to be distinguished from “change.” All growth is change, but not all change is growth. Growth is movement, intended or unintended, and is most easily expressed in quantifications like number

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of faculty members, budgets, gross enrollments, annual apportionments, and the dollar price of properties purchased. Qualitative measurements are famously difficult to accomplish, but essential to a well-rounded history. Mostly, inference yields qualitative statements, often tenuous. The historian’s imagination has to fill in the spaces with informed conjecture.

I advise future historians of the District to devise a working taxonomy of variations on the theme of growth. *Counter-growth*, for instance, would cover the reactions that grew into firmly held precepts and brave actions in response to [the first superintendent] McCunn and his antimodel.

Ungrowth would be the classification of planned-for growth that did not happen, like the master plans of the 1966 building bonds. *Unrealized growth* refers to that which could have been growth; for example, if funds had been available, if faculty could have been hired, if facilities were built. *Malignant growth* is unwanted, perverse growth that subverts standing rules or norms, like graffiti and vandalism, student plagiarism, grade inflation, or criminal fraud in financial aid.

I also advise inclusion and discussion of *indicator growth*. Away from each trail a story of its own that connects to related stories. For example,

the advent of an armed, sworn peace officer security force; experimental colleges; innovative scheduling and staffing; the evolution of student activities and government; the increase in the proportion of classes taught by part-time instructors; articulation agreements with transfer host colleges and universities; the installation of matriculation; the increase in ESL instruction; the appearance of learning-assistance centers; state mandates, like “critical thinking” in curriculum; professional staff development and improvement of instruction; notable adventures in infusion of technology into instruction and learning. These are all indicators of change. But are they truly indicators of growth? And what, if any, are the connections among them? The next history would be hard to write, but it would be a task well worth pursuing.

About the Contra Costa Community College District

THE CONTRA COSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (District) was founded by a public vote in December 1948 and first opened its doors to students in 1949. It is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. In 2009, the District serves a population of about one million people, and its boundaries encompass all but 48 of the 734-square-mile land area of Contra Costa County. The District Office is located in historic downtown Martinez.

The District is governed by an elected five-member Governing Board, who serve four-year terms, and one student member, selected by student government, who serves a one-year term on a rotational basis among the colleges. The chancellor, appointed by the Governing Board, carries out the policies of the District.

For more information, please visit www.4ccd.edu.



“Over the six decades of its existence, the College District has served the needs of some one million local citizens. It has done so with commitment and innovation. I hope this collection of memories will honor all those who have dedicated their lives to this noble endeavor.”

—Bill Harlan, collector and editor of *Sharing Memories: Contra Costa Community College District, 1948–2008*

Stories by Terry Armstrong, Helen Benjamin, Chet Case, Charles Collins, Vince Custodio, Baji Majette Daniels, Karl Drexel, Beverly Reardon Dutra, Nannette Finley-Hancock, Peter García, Susan Goldstein, Marianne Goodson, Bill Harlan, Eugene Huff, Thais Kishi, Jean Knox, Linda Kohler, Bruce Koller, Jim Lacy, Marge Lasky, Chris Leivas, Richard Livingston, Don Mahan, Bob Martincich, Dianne McClain, Jeffrey Michels, Evelyn Patterson, Gene Ross, Diane Scott-Summers, Ruth Sutter, Beatrice Green Taines, Greg Tilles, Joan Tucker, Maria Theresa Viramontes, Judy Vroman, and Dick Worthen



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