

A Litany of Dysfunction

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I confess, up until several weeks ago, I took Victor Valley College for granted. Because of the recent "Call to Action" initiated by Holly Noel and Diana Carloni, I attended a number of VVC-related meetings and learned that:

- Our community college has been under varying degrees of censure or probation for the past 8 years.
- The team leader of the accrediting commission who visited the college in 2005 was hired in 2008 to get us off/ keep us off probation;
- We are still on probation in 2013, with three — what I consider serious — items outstanding that have not yet been resolved.
- The teachers and staff are "working hard" to address the probation issues
- One trustee received help from the VVC CEO in gaining employment in the past and is now in a position to return the favor (a conflict of interest), has not been attending meetings to resolve the probation issues, and recently, only after denying it and after public pressure, announced he plans to resign soon.
- One trustee's primary interest is making the college affordable for children who attend the local schools and want to attend VVC.
- One trustee's primary interest is preventing financial mismanagement (this is the trustee whose wife sued the college some years ago while he was on the board (a conflict of interest).
- One trustee's primary interest is being a cheerleader for the teachers and students, and doesn't like negative stuff on the front page of the local newspapers.
- One trustee's primary interest is in making VVC accountable to the community and sustainable for the future benefit of our Victor Valley residents
- Top level VVC officials are in the middle of a turnover (retirement or moving on)
- Problems needing solutions are still not resolved, and no specific plans with time lines have been identified and shared with the trustees
- The acting CEO maintains that, if VVC were to lose its accreditation, which he assures us won't happen, another institution would more than likely step in and take control, thus assuring the students do not lose anything, although he cannot guarantee this would happen.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) assessed our college and found significant, ongoing shortcomings that threaten the long term viability of this institution. This has put a dark cloud over the Victor Valley's future. Based on all the evidence finally brought to the public's attention, the responsibility for these shortcomings is clearly with the Board of Trustees. The board has allowed this condition to exist for years without demanding results from the CEO.

VVC is a primary, if not the primary, asset of the Victor Valley. If we lose control of its destiny, we lose substantial control of our own Victor Valley destiny. If we lose control, who is going to be interested in our community's economic survival by providing appropriate educational and training needs? Our local economy is hurting, and has been for years. Unless we make significant improvements in the way VVC is managed, our economic and social pains will only continue and intensify.

Larry Hoover lives in Spring Valley Lake.