

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

September 6, 2013

Don't say 'union'

When a community college loses its accreditation, it goes out of business, on the effective date. San Francisco Community College lost its accreditation in July, 2013, effective July 2014. The state community college chancellor announced that to prevent this from happening, he would appoint a special trustee to manage the school, in effect making the existing board a zombie board, with no power or authority.

The main problem at San Francisco was the same as at Victor Valley College. Full-time faculty compensation is too high. As the Daily Press editorial page has pointed out, VVC total cost and benefits for one full time faculty member is \$175,000. The base work week is 23 hours, about 30 weeks a year. Some full-time faculty hold down full-time positions outside the college. A review of the financial statements and budgets shows deficits of \$3 to \$7 million annually. The only cost that could be reduced that much is full-time faculty.

Despite seven presidents, the problem has not even been acknowledged, let alone solved. At a recent board meeting to select a new president, I addressed the board, reviewing the San Francisco situation and the similar situation here. I pointed out that the most important task of a new president would be to renegotiate the fulltime faculty union contract, and candidates' ability in that area should be paramount. No sooner had I said, "union contract," the board President Lorrie Denison interrupted me, and said it was forbidden to mention, "union contract." I explained again how that was vital to selecting a president, but she offered no support or basis of her decision.

Peter Allan, the current interim president and candidate for the permanent president position, has expressed his opinion that the VVC faculty is worth every penny they are paid, and last June drew up a new full-time faculty union contract that increased the overpayment (using the steps.)

There are some dissident voices on the board. However, it will be an uphill battle to thwart Ms. Denison's march to becoming a selfcreated zombie.

Marshall Kagan Victorville