

# Eying future deficit, VVC to continue labor negotiations

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## [Brooke Self, Staff Writer](#)

VICTORVILLE • Victor Valley College's Board of Trustees will hold a special closed meeting Wednesday evening to continue labor negotiations in an attempt to reduce the college's structural deficit, officials said.

The district recently hired Randy Erickson as the lead negotiator to represent the college's administration, VVC spokesman Bill Greulich said Tuesday by phone. The position was left vacant when the college's vice president of human resources retired in September.

G.H. Javaheripour, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, said previously in a budget workshop meeting with the board that the college faces a potential structural deficit of \$3.5 million by 2014-15. That deficit could grow to \$6.4 million by 2016-17 if budget adjustments aren't soon made.

Trustee Joseph W. Brady said that exact details of what is being negotiated would not be disclosed to the public to allow for "good faith" bargaining. The board was first introduced to the negotiating process at their last meeting on Sept. 23.

"Tomorrow night is to start discussing strategies and how we'll move forward," Brady said Tuesday. "There's no more waiting; the days for waiting are over. Now we need to come together as a board to ensure that our student and employee partners have a college that is financially solvent and we're all looking at the same set of numbers."

At the two most recent board meetings, the college's administration and employee groups appeared divided on the college's finances and projections of a structural deficit. The Vice President of the Academic Senate representing full-time faculty cited erroneous numbers questioning the college's financial office reports, Javaheripour said.

"There is a level of distrust among some of the employees groups about the amount of money the college has to spend," Brady said.

For this reason he proposed the creation of an independent financial advisory committee similar to the college's Measure JJ Bond Oversight committee, that would include community members with experience in accounting and government finances. The committee would also include representatives from each of the employee groups and aid in easing tensions and distrust that exists between the groups, he said.

Board President Lorrie Denson said previously that they would more seriously discuss creating that committee after the college completes its upcoming report due to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges due on Oct. 15.

According to the agenda, Trustee Dennis Henderson will be absent from Wednesday's meeting, but will be available by telephone.

*Brooke Self may be reached at 760-951-6232 or [BSelf@VVDailyPress.com](mailto:BSelf@VVDailyPress.com). You can also reach her on Twitter at @BrookeSelf.*