

VVC

Students demand ACCJC probe

Resolution to investigate accrediting agency passes in state Student Senate in record time

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VICTORVILLE *Victor Valley College students are pushing for an investigation of the regional accrediting agency that has placed the college on and off warning and probation for the past several years.

VVC Associated Student Body President Evelyn Blanco and student advocate Amanda Monroy authored a resolution that was voted on and approved by student representatives from 87 of the 112 community colleges in California, Blanco said.

The resolution passed in one minute, eight seconds at the Student Senate for California Community Colleges on Nov. 1, Blanco said. It was the fastest resolution on record to be approved by the SSSCC, which is considered the premier representative of student associations, she said. The adopted resolution will now be turned over to the California Community College's Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office and lobbied for at the state level.

"I feel a sense of pride for Victor Valley College for being at the forefront of such an important issue and advocating for students in the entire state," Blanco said. "I feel like our issues from our little locality are being able to help students across the state."

Approximately 25 percent of community colleges are currently on some form of warning by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which means the agency's actions could potentially impact many students, Blanco said.

The ACCJC also has been under scrutiny in the past year by the U.S. Department of Education and the city attorney of San Francisco. In a letter to the president of the ACCJC, Barbara Beno, the department said the ACCJC was out of compliance in several areas including concerns about conflicts of interest and insufficient faculty representation on accreditation teams. The accrediting agency was given a year from August to take immediate action to come into compliance, the letter states.

In late August, the city attorney of San Francisco announced the city was suing the agency after they made the decision to shut down the City College of San Francisco in July, according to online reports. City Attorney Dennis Herrera's suit alleges the ACCJC unlawfully allowed its advocacy and political bias to prejudice its evaluation of college accreditation standards, according to a news release from the city attorney's office.

"When a college closes down, the first people that are hurt are students," Blanco said, "I know faculty also lose jobs but students lose access to their education. I just want to see more transparency and accountability of the ACCJC to students. I'm hoping that more than anything that it will send a message. ... I hope that the ACCJC will see that some of their policies are hurting students."

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