

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

January 27, 2014

Trustees should select

In his letter to the editor last week, Peter Allan attempts to lay the blame for the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees voting for a 19-member president/superintendent selection committee on the board. While the board did finally vote to do so, the responsibility for this decision does not rest with them alone.

At the Jan. 14 meeting, Mr. Allan was asked by Trustee Joseph Brady what would happen if the board hired the superintendent/president and did not use a committee. Allan clearly explained that doing so would result in various Title 5 and Equal Employment Opportunity and Education Code violations. He rejected the idea that the board would try to do such a thing.

This was immediately after both Brady and Trustee Lori Denson had publicly said their initial board membership training told them that this was their primary function — to hire and fire the superintendent/president.

While Mr. Allan has a background in law, he is not the board's or the VVC District's legal counsel. When asked, he should have directed the question to counsel. The very first paragraph of VVC Administrative Policy 7120 says the board will "establish a separate procedure for filling the position of superintendent/president." It references Board Policy 2431, which then references Title 5, Sections 53000 and the following. Access to the internet proves that the bottom line here is that all the college has to do is ensure that the person who is responsible for the district's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan oversee the process for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

So, why would Mr. Allan cite AP 7120, the very first line of which says this policy will address the district's recruitment and hiring of all employees "other than the superintendent/president?" Maybe Mr. Allan wants to interpret VVC administrative and board policies to suit his, or perhaps the union's, agenda. He said during the meeting that he had prepared his 13-member version of the selection committee based on "review of AP 7120 with input from the recruiting firm, PPL."

Any guesses as to whether the recruiting firm, which must maintain a working relationship with Mr. Allan, was pressured to see it his way? At the January board meeting, the trustees attempted to assert their rights as trustees to follow Board Policy 2431. Clearly Mr. Allan did everything in his power, before, during and now after the meeting to prevent that. By doing so, he has exceeded his role as administrator and pre-empted the board from doing its job. The revolving door of VVC presidents cannot continue if the college is to survive. Whatever the reason, there needs to be a change and it needs to start at the very beginning of the process. The board needs to take back its power, reverse the ill-advised decision to select a large selection committee and do its job. Let the trustees represent the community and choose the next VVC superintendent/president.

Holly Noel Apple Valley