

OUR OPINION

VVC Surprise

August 16, 2013

Congratulations. Now do something to get a school vexed by accreditation challenges back on track.

We're talking, of course, about the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees, which shocked much of the Western World on Wednesday night by appointing someone to replace Michael Krause, who resigned six weeks ago after taking a job that moved him away from the Victor Valley, voiding the residency requirement needed to keep his butt in the seat.

Out with the old, in with the new. In this case the board voted 3-1 to select Victorville attorney Brandon Wood from a dozen people who applied for the position. We don't know much about Wood other than he specializes in criminal defense (undoubtedly a lucrative profession in the Victor Valley) and that he's president of something called the High Desert Bar Association Board.

Oh yeah, according to his bio on the law firm's website, he was also once an aviator for the U.S. Navy, meaning he engaged in the gutsy business of landing jets onto moving aircraft carriers plying the high seas. We can only hope that it could prepare him for the craziness of the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees.

Attention all hands not up to speed on the latest scuttlebutt:

Last May, Dr. Christopher O'Hearn was president of the college — or not, depending on whether Peter Allen had taken the reigns as interim as attested to by some and refuted by others. Strangely, one of the refuters was O'Hearn himself, who went on medical leave and then was president again until finally calling it quits at the end of June. That left an already contentious board divided on who to appoint as his replacement (it was eventually Allen), while promising a bright new beginning for the college. Talk about awkward.

That Woodstock moment faded even before Krause made it to the door. Then things got really weird. Accusations flew with recriminations both from board members, faculty, administrators and concerned citizens with unclear ties to the school.

Among the low-lights: A running letter-writing campaign ensued on the Op/Ed pages of the Daily Press; someone named Glickstein sued Krause for libel; rumor had it that Byzantine machinations of the teachers unions were about to secretly ambush the cloak-and-dagger faction of who knows who; the four remaining members on the board called a string of special meetings to decide how to replace Krause, only to cancel them due to lack of quorum or lock horns in disagreement. Really?

The purpose of a community college is to teach. It's a place where people can learn a vocation or get the necessary lower division credits to transfer to a four-year college or university; to explore life's options, to redefine, reinvent and receive a second chance. Community colleges are the America of education.

Lingering problems with accreditation threaten VVC from carrying out its purpose. We can only hope that Wood's addition finally means a proper focus to the board so trustees can get those problems resolved and move forward.

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