

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

July 11, 2013

VVC's free speech denials

In yet another act to deny public participation at Victor Valley College Board of Trustee meetings, two members of the public arrived at the July 9 meeting after 5 p.m. but before the regular session at 6 p.m., to submit speaker cards to address matters on the agenda.

They were denied the right to speak because they did not submit their speaker request card prior to 5 p.m., when the executive session portion of the meeting was called to order. The public members did not wish to address the executive session portion of the agenda, but matters in the general session. Nonetheless, it was too late.

What nonsense is that? General session is called to order at 6 p.m. Roll call is taken. Pledge of allegiance follows. The meeting begins at six.

Any card submitted prior to 6 p.m. is submitted "before the meeting is called to order," as the printed agenda states. What arbitrary rule says you have to submit a speaker card prior to 5 p.m.? Only the rules of a board and administration that does not want public input, that wants to hide the business of the people from the people.

The practice is disgraceful and a violation of the rights to free speech and access to our local elected officials. It should be condemned and a complaint made to the Public Integrity Unit of the District Attorney's office. It will be.

Diana J. Carloni

Victorville

The July 9 meeting of the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees was a travesty and embarrassment for the public as well as the college. The many excellent programs, faculty, student achievements and academic accolades given were applauded. However, everything was overshadowed by the unwillingness of the board to accept public input because it was not submitted prior to 5 p.m. How many members of the public can get off work at 4-4:45 p.m. to sign a card in order to speak at a meeting that begins at 6 p.m.?

This was not all. Interim Superintendent/President Peter Alan, when asked to give an update on the accreditation process, gave a brief statement and noted that because faculty are out for the summer the accreditation teams are not meeting. It seems that accreditation is not a major concern at all.

The faculty senate speaker went into great detail about how long it takes to work on student learning outcomes and that when you teach different sections and different classes it takes even longer. Then everything has to be downloaded onto the computer.

The presentation seemed to be one that would explain why the faculty should be paid more for doing all this extra work. (How many of the working public, would be paid extra for doing work that is expected of them, especially when there is a mandate that they do so?)

The most embarrassing moment came when one trustee, who had apparently not read the agenda items, wanted to backtrack and speak to items under the "Consent Items" that had already been voted on. It took several minutes for the board to get back on track.

Finally, the trustees could not agree on the method of replacing the vacancy on the board. The board president presented a timeline for the selection of a new trustee and asked the board to approve it. Two trustees wanted the vacancy replaced with the person who came in third in the General Election. Two wanted to go through a selection process, which is normal for most boards. Without a decision within 60 days the vacancy will go to a public election.

Carollee Stater

Former VVC Trustee

Apple Valley