

## Balla-Hawkins Tapped as CCCI Legislative Advocate

CCCI is pleased to announce that the organization has engaged David Balla-Hawkins to advocate on behalf of community college faculty in Sacramento and to assist CCCI members in local organizing and electoral



Balla-Hawkins

activities. Hawkins is no stranger to community college faculty issues, having served eight years as the legislative advocate for the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) from 1993 to 2001. He also advocated for California State University faculty from 2001 to 2011 and is well known for his work in grassroots organizing. He got his start as a student at Butte Community College, where he was involved in political activities addressing peace and social-justice issues and opposing campus budget cuts, student-fee increases, and faculty lay-offs.

Hawkins is glad to return to working with community college faculty because of the work we do:

Faculty are educators, mentors, counselors, and friends to their students – students who reflect the cultural, economic and ethnic diversity of our state.

Community college faculty play a key role in securing our future economic and societal health.

CCCI considers itself lucky to find an advocate so familiar with the unique (some would say peculiar) aspects of the California Community Colleges and looks forward to the benefits of Hawkins's expertise. He also offers a wealth of experience with and enthusiasm for campus organizing. This is an area of advocacy that few faculty unions have explored. CCCI members are especially eager to gain this new resource.

In the coming year, Hawkins will help expand the role CCCI plays at both the state and local district levels. He agrees with CCCI that the strength of the Independents comes from their ability to work with our natural allies among other faculty groups and student organizations as well as with administrative groups when our interests coincide. On the other hand, from our local bargaining, we are well aware of the importance of flexing our muscles, at times, to achieve our goals. Hawkins is looking toward a long-term goal of gaining

a stronger influence with legislators and district boards and building an infrastructure whereby legislators and their staff actively seek our advice and input on policy and budget matters – with candidates

seeking CCCI support recognizing that our active engagement in local and state elections is pivotal to their success.

He points out that due to term limits, local public engagement has grown in its influence and has become a necessity. Paying due respect to how faculty often feel that they have enough to do attending to their teaching, professional, and family responsibilities, Hawkins sees his role to be a provider of “simple tools and thoughtful counsel that will empower individuals without overwhelming them, tools that can be used effectively to help CCCI members make things better for their students and their colleagues.”

This is why CCCI chose Hawkins as its advocate and advocacy trainer. He promises a unique combination of state-level influence and local empowerment. At one point in the deliberations, a CCCI representative explained that the organization should not seek to supplant any of the community college voices that are already heard in Sacramento; instead, we want to add another voice, to have an additional representative who, in a legislative hearing, will stand up for community college faculty. David Hawkins is sure to add a very impressive voice.

## Student Success . . .

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for assessing student success; address statutory and regulatory barriers to student success and completion; identify best practices, especially with regard to basic skills; consider alternative funding options for providing student services; consider alternative funding models in other states; and review the effective use of technology to promote student success and completion. While it was certainly a prime interest of the author of SB 1143, it is important to note that the Task Force did not recommend an “alternative” outcomes-based funding model.

It is doubtful, of course, that the recommendation, whatever its final form, will make a great impact on student success at a time when the colleges are reeling under dramatic budget cuts. Still, the nature of its reception in the Legislature may have a significant impact on next year's community college budget discussion.



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## Economics of Scarcity Becoming “Business as Usual”

by Richard Hansen, CCCI President

California's economic stagnation persists, and as a result, the community colleges face ever-more challenging budget cuts. But the problem now runs deeper because as the recession continues, the cuts not only get worse, they begin to look like “business as usual.” As we continue to suffer under the doldrums of a stagnant economy, many of us also begin to look around for someone or something to blame, a scapegoat. Here in California, we have our own unique manifestations of the effects of this long-term economic downturn, and our own particular results with respect to the state's community colleges.

As the stagnation continues, the community college open-access model is under attack. In a time of scarcity, the argument has grown louder that the state cannot afford the “luxury” of open access. There is a growing obsession with student readiness, outcomes, and completion rates. Education is becoming less about intellectual exploration and more about specific preparation designed to fit students into a well-defined niche in the grand socio-economic scheme of things.

This is evident in the motivations behind SB 1143, a bill that ultimately sought to punish the community colleges by instituting an outcomes-based funding model as a means to force them to become more efficient producers of student outcomes. The plan was to cut student service programs to save the state money and then cut them again to create a fund of “prize money” that would be doled out to districts that found a way to improve student success in an era of less state support for students.

An alternative to this system of punishment was found in the Student Success Task Force (see related article), mandated to consider outcomes-based funding but also granted the opportunity to formulate a grand plan for improving community college student completion. A colleague recently pointed out that, unfortunately, the

task force recommendations do little to point toward what might be accomplished once the state emerges from its doldrums; instead, it is primarily a plan of reformulation in an ongoing environment of scarcity. The recommendations are mired in a psychology of facing a bitter “new reality” in which we must replace open ac-

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## Hendricks Endorsed for CalSTRS CC Board Seat

by Jeffrey Michels, CCCI Executive Secretary

All community college faculty who are active members of CalSTRS will soon receive ballots by mail to elect the next community college representative on the CalSTRS Board, and in the current political climate where public pensions are under attack, it is crucial that we elect someone knowledgeable and strong.



Hendricks

CCCI has endorsed Sharon Hendricks, a retirement issues activist from Los Angeles City College with a solid track record advocating for both full-time and part-time community college faculty. Hendricks has served on the Faculty Association of

California Community Colleges (FACCC) Board and FACCC Retirement Committee; she is the Retirement Liaison for the LA College Faculty Guild; and perhaps most importantly, she has been mentored and endorsed by the outgoing community college representative on the CalSTRS Board, Carolyn Widener.

Hendricks “understands the challenges we face in preserving our retirement security and is committed to

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## Economics of Scarcity . . .

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cess to institutions wherein students are free to explore with a more controlled process by which students enter a community college, achieve specified completion goals, and exit. Sadly, they will find a marketplace that was quick to demand that the colleges impart certain skills but offers little guarantee that these skills will translate into either a long-term or a meaningful career.

As public employees, we suffer from this same marketplace in which the prolonged stagnation has led to a growing criticism of our pensions. It is more pervasive in other parts of the country, but here in California we have the ballot initiative system in which anyone with \$200 can file a proposition, and several have been filed in recent months aimed at undermining public employee pensions. So far, these efforts have not found the financial backing to pay for signature gathering and will, most likely, never get off the ground.

Even an organization like the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility (CFFR) hasn't been able to supply the leadership to put a serious ballot campaign together, but they make a lot of noise by publishing articles and research reports critical of public pensions.

## Hendricks Endorsed for CalSTRS Board . . .

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working effectively with all our members to address them," says Widener. She also understands the complexities of representing both part-time and full-time college faculty in a pension system that was designed around the K-12 system.

Hendricks has worked as both part-time and full-time faculty teaching speech and language pathology in community colleges, and she also spent several years as a speech pathologist with LA's K-12 schools. According to Widener, Hendricks' broad experience will serve her well on the board where K-12 interests often dominate, and community college faculty need a strong advocate. Most K-12 teachers are working full-time, for example, while college part-timers "have the hardest time getting vested, have the hardest time getting service credit, and receive the lowest benefits."

Hendricks has also been endorsed by FACCC, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), the California Part-Time Faculty Association (CPFA), as well as a long list of local unions and faculty leaders throughout the state.

She is known for being passionate and articulate as

Like-minded legislators take these reports seriously and have sponsored numerous bills that, fortunately, are not taken seriously, so rarely make it out of committee.

However, the economic downturn has lasted so long that traditional supporters of the public sector have joined the pension "reform" bandwagon. At the end of this year's legislative session, Assembly Speaker John Pérez (D-Los Angeles) and Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) joined forces to form an interim Conference Committee to hold hearings in conjunction with the governor on pension reform between now and the beginning of the next session in January.

Pension reform is on the horizon. Many now seem to believe that reform is required not only for the sake of the state economy but to ensure the future stability of public pensions. CCCI is enthusiastic about having its recently hired advocate (see related article) to add our voice to those of other groups in the defense of both the quality and sustainability of faculty retirement benefits.

These fights for public investment in education to maintain the quality of our institutions and the quality of life for those who teach in them will ultimately define the future of our profession as well as the character of our state. We must not shy away from them.

well as accessible and committed to educating her fellow faculty. CCCI President Rich Hansen notes that Sharon has not only experience with the CalSTRS Board and a solid understanding of retirement issues, she "also has the relationships with faculty throughout the state to make her an outstanding representative."

CCCI members should watch for their ballots, which should arrive by October 1, and be sure not only to vote but to help spread the word about Sharon Hendricks. For more details about her campaign, visit her website at [sharon4strs.com](http://sharon4strs.com).

Her platform defines her priorities well: to advocate for part-time and full-time community college faculty and K-12 teachers in the CalSTRS system; to fight against the attack on public sector workers and Defined Benefit pension plans; to work to restore the value of our pension fund for current and future teachers; and to maintain regular two-way communication with faculty throughout the state.

CCCI believes we need someone trusted and focused to represent us on the CalSTRS board, and that's why Sharon Hendricks won a unanimous vote to endorse her at the spring CCCI meeting, which she attended.

## Student Success Recommendations Go Public

Following the September 14 Student Success Task Force meeting, a tentative recommendation went public with presentations planned throughout the state, beginning in September and continuing into December. Two of these will be open forums, one in Northern and the other in Southern California. The rest are scheduled as part of other community college constituency meetings. The Academic Senate's Fall Plenary, November 3-5 in San Diego, may be the primary opportunity for faculty input, but other meetings should be open to all.

This is an important period in which to voice opinions. The recommendations have far reaching implications for how the community colleges operate, and some touch on areas of collective bargaining. The list of Task Force presentations is expected to be made available on the Chancellor's Office web site, [www.ccco.edu](http://www.ccco.edu) – use the link to the "Task Force on Student Success."

The Task Force of 20 members, representing a wide variety of system and community interests and backed up by Chancellor's Office staff, has been meeting monthly since January 2011. Four faculty were selected to serve on the Task Force, including former Academic Senate President Jane Patton and CCCI President Rich Hansen, plus one faculty who serves as a member of the Board of Governors. All of the Task Force meetings have been open to the public but without opportunities for public comment. The group will meet again in November and December to consider the input collected from the presentations statewide and craft a final recommendation. This is scheduled to go to the Community College Board of Governors for a first reading at its January meeting with approval of a final version set for March when a report is due in the state legislature.

What emerged from the September meeting was a document containing the essential elements of the proposal but omitting the details as to how it will be structured and funded. In essence, the proposal in its current form amounts to a huge increase in student services with

each entering student required to meet with a counselor to write an educational plan for which progress will be reviewed annually. There is to be an improved flow from high school into college, and college readiness will be assessed using new diagnostic instruments. Students must begin to address basic skills deficiencies within the first year, and professional development, emphasizing basic skills, will be available for staff and administrators as well as both full- and part-time faculty.

The Chancellor's Office will be strengthened to coordinate community college communications with K-12 and transfer institutions, set statewide student success goals, and develop a longitudinal student record system. It will administer a new "Student Success Initiative Fund" for which colleges will be held accountable through reports on selected student success goals.

In addition, the recommendation calls for the consolidation, with the exception of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), of current categorically funded programs. The plan contemplates three subgroups, one for workforce categoricals; one for the part-time faculty funds for office hours, medical benefits, and compensation equity along with equal employment opportunity; and one for all of the remaining student service funds. Flexible use of funds is to be permitted within each subgroup.

The Student Success Task Force and the process leading to its report to the legislature resulted from passage of SB 1143, which became law on September 28, 2010. The bill originated in February 2010, sponsored by Carol Liu (D-Pasadena), containing intent language "to enact legislation to establish a framework for allocating state funds to community colleges in a manner that provides incentives for community colleges to assist students in completing coursework."

The bill went through several amendments, and after facing concerted opposition from all of the community college advocates, it was rewritten to mandate the present Task Force. It was the promise of significant reform through SB 1143 that derailed Liu's later attempt to withhold some \$100 million in 2010-11 community colleges' budget to be released to districts only after they met certain student completion goals. There is a great deal at stake, then, in what becomes of the Student Success Task Force recommendation.

In the end, the SB 1143 directed the Task Force to apply multiple measures and find effective programs

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### When this Envelope Arrives, Open It to Vote for Sharon Henricks!



Neither the STRS System nor the Board endorses a particular candidate or position.