

# Board of Trustees Report

## June 13, 2012, Educational Services Center

Angrily scrawled placards, shouting protestors, and blaring car horns greeted Board members in advance of the June 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting at the District Office (now, the Educational Services Center or ESC). The pandemonium did not stop at the curb but flowed into the anteroom and filled the Board Room as the public session got under way just past 4:00 PM.

The Board's first order of business was the swearing in of the new Student Trustee, Daniel Campos, a student at LA Mission College who hopes to transfer to UCSD to study Business Administration with an international emphasis. The out-going Student Trustee, Brandon Batham, congratulated Daniel and advised him of the hard work and challenges of the job. After the swearing in with the Chancellor, members of the Board welcomed Daniel as he took his seat on the dais. Minutes from regular and closed sessions on May 9 and May 23 were voted on and approved.

Jim Adams of the Building Trades Council spoke from the resource table to announce that their negotiating team would be opening negotiations on wages on behalf of their membership. There were no added comments.

The President of the Board moved to the Public Speakers portion of the agenda. The first to address the Board was Saul Perez, from what he called the LA Mission College Student Empowerment Movement. He began with a quotation from Cesar Chavez and went on to list statistics describing the impact of the budget cuts and fee increases on tutoring, library hours and class sections. He even compared the situation to what was taking place in Greece. Another speaker, Ivan, also from Mission spoke of the difficulties of working and going to school and getting the classes he needed. He said he was undocumented, brought to the US at the age of eight, and wanted the cuts to stop. Anna Cantano, who brought her infant in a stroller, spoke of the lack of childcare at Mission and the closing of the Child Development Center. She attacked the Mission Senate for being responsible for the cuts and personally named Angela Echeverri as the culprit. She claimed that the Mission Senate had also asked to remove her crying infant from their meeting. Ms. Cantano concluded by asking each Trustee by name, "Will you stand with us in solidarity?" Most Board members did not indicate a response after having been warned at previous meetings by General Counsel that public testimony was not to be used for exchanges or direct replies. Another Mission student, speaking on behalf of the Occupy Mission folks, proposed that the District establish training for faculty, students and administrators but seemed unclear about the details. Each Mission speaker was followed by applause and raucous calls from the audience.

April Abercrombie, a transfer student from LAHC currently enrolled at UCLA, thanked the Board for allowing "us to tell our stories" and provided details about her successful transition ostensibly using her district-wide priority enrollment. April was the first to speak directly in opposition to proposed BR 8603 (which had been withdrawn from the agenda) that would establish college priority over district-

wide priority. She was followed by a student who begged the Board not to remove district-wide priority enrollment, complaining of problems getting her classes and making progress through her educational plan. The out-going Student Trustee then spoke against the proposed Board Rule, arguing that students needed district-wide priority to achieve their educational goals in a timely manner and that being free to take courses at multiple campuses allowed students with many units to finish faster.

Another Mission student, John Solomon, used his time to accuse Angela Echeverri, LAMC Senate President, of forcing him to lie and write letters attacking Dr. Perez, President of LAMC and accusing him of racism. A loud outburst of applause and catcalls followed his accusations.

The Board then turned to reports from closed session and its standing committees. Trustee Svonkin reported that at Finance and Audit Committee that morning, the committee had agreed to recommend to the full Board that the District maintain a 5% General Reserve and a 7.5% Contingency Reserve to be used in the event the Governor's November Tax Initiative fails and only with the approval of the Board. If the initiative passed, the Contingency Reserve would revert to a 5% amount, with the 2.5% remainder being redistributed to the campuses as quickly as possible. In addition, the proposed new Budget Allocation model was approved and would move forward to a vote. Finally, the Accounting office was asked to investigate the 10% overpayments to staff that continued after other fixes had been put in place and to recommend steps to close the overpayment gap still further.

John Walsh, a "community activist" with a website, then asked to speak because he had been in the lobby area where there was "no air conditioning" and did not hear his name called. He was given five minutes to attack the District, but sensing the rambunctious mood and the large number of vocal Mission students still in the room, he began playing to the audience and announced that the students were getting a civics lesson in democracy.

The Board then returned to two resolutions and a report on the Van de Kamp Innovation Center. The first resolution was to congratulate retiring LACCD classified employees and it passed unanimously. The second resolution, authored by Board President Miguel Santiago, praised Brandon Batham for coming onto the Board mid-term after the departure of the previous student Trustee. The Trustees noted that Brandon was always prepared and ready for every meeting. They praised his civility and his work ethic and wished him luck in the future. He was presented with a resolution by the Board and the Board posed with him for photographs.

At the Van de Kamp site, the LACCD lost a court case for failing to file a supplemental environmental impact report (SEIR) and would be required to pay between \$100K and \$150K for the court-mandated report so that the Alliance Charter High School could continue to operate at the site. The presentation by Trustee Veres took the staff recommendations and reduced them to the four best options of the ten originally proposed. Those options included: using the site for district-wide academic programs; relocating office or business functions to the site; exploring a long-term lease with the charter school including shared costs for legally mandated studies; and considering potential long-term tenancy options. I asked whether the final decision, due by the end of summer, would include input from the Academic Senate as faculty representatives and the Chancellor responded affirmatively. I mentioned

that the Senate had an interest in finding a location for showcasing academic programs like the Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy (FTLA) and new classroom technology training.

Testimony followed from principal, teachers and students from the Charter school, community members, and the VdK Coalition. The principal talked about the outstanding caliber of students and faculty, including the fact the school had ranked fourth in the LAUSD with an API score of 884. The college-preparatory aspect of the Charter school is a good fit for the District and he emphasized the level of support the school has gained in the community. Students testified that the small size of the school, the “great faculty” and the opportunity to know almost everyone by name (both faculty and students) made the Charter school a place where they enjoyed learning. A parent from the community who spoke only Spanish related how important the school was to the community by keeping out gangs and drugs and providing excellent educational opportunities. An environmental science teacher at the Charter school said the students were engaged in the community through clean-up and tree-planting projects working with the Friends of the LA River and Councilman Ed Reyes’ office, as well as, Student TreePeople. Students were able to see their contributions to the environment everyday as they came and went from their campus.

Then it was Mr. Walsh’s turn again for a bit more grand-standing in front of a boisterous Mission college student crowd and a few more opportunities to promote his website. And, of course, Mr. Walsh could not refrain from a moment to engage as a friend of the Chicano movement. More parents testified and repeated the concerns of the community and the students that this fine school would lose its location and see the school close down. Micki Jackson, a frequent speaker at Board meetings from the Van de Kamp Coalition, spoke to the Board’s legal defeat and expressed her regrets that the Charter school would be forced to vacate the premises given the District’s current financial straits.

The Chancellor, as part of his report, introduced Deborah Harrington and the FTLA class. The presentation underscored the value of the program to the faculty who participated and the ripple-effect that the graduates would have on their campuses. The hope is that each graduate would serve as an inspiration point and resource for innovative techniques in teaching and learning. Harrington expressed her interest in the Van de Kamp site as a possible future home of the FTLA and place to invite speakers that could inspire and motivate faculty excellence. The weary (and still smiling) ‘graduates’ posed for pictures with the Chancellor. For more information: [ftla.laccdssi.org](http://ftla.laccdssi.org).

A recommendation from the Chancellor to authorize the renaming of buildings at LATTC for trees was considered and well-received by the Board (though I raised the question of whether there were aloe trees and sage trees; it seems as though they can be Googled and therefore they must exist. However, it seems to depend on your definition of ‘tree.’). There was also a recommendation to appoint of another member of the District Citizen’s Oversight Committee, Robert D. Arias, a Mission College representative.

The consent calendar, except for some minor tweaks and typos, passed, and two items were pulled that required a super-majority vote. Among the tweaks was the Chancellor’s announcement that Dr. Moore, President at City College, would be taking a chancellor’s position at the Ventura Community

College District, and so her employment contract renewal with the LACCD would be removed from consent agenda. Presidents Burke-Kelly (LA Pierce) and Daniels (LASC) both received contract extensions through June 30, 2015. After some noticed items were run through, the meeting adjourned just past 6:30 PM.