

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: College of Marin: Problems and Progress

Report Date: April 10, 2007

Response by: Associated Students, College of Marin

Title: _____

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1, F8, F10, F13, F15
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F2-F7, F9, F11-F12, F14
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R4, R6 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 6/28/07 Signed: Hea Jong Tam

Number of pages attached 4x2



Response to Grand Jury Findings

Facilities Modernization

F1. COM facilities at both campuses are in extremely poor condition. Voters passed a \$249.5 million bond in November 2004 to modernize them.

We agree with this statement.

F2. The modernization project is proceeding at a significantly slower pace than previously anticipated, mainly due to a prior lack of detailed plans.

Many other factors have played a part in delaying the modernization project. For example, the committee structure in place—the District Modernization Committee (DMC) and its subcommittees—that collects feedback was very inefficient; there were also many questions raised as to the proper relationship of the DMC to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the new Participatory Governance System (PGS). This frustrated many campus constituencies and stalled progress on the modernization. Also delaying the modernization was the lack of necessary planning documents that was overlooked by the then new administration. Finally, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) decision to place the college on warning status further hindered bond progress, consuming the time and energy of many administrators, staff, faculty and students.

F3. Costs per project are significantly higher than past estimates, so less will be done. Spending is not longer budgeted for two of the nine buildings previously targeted for modernization. Only one of the remaining seven buildings has a budget for solar panels to generate electricity.

Although only the Physical Education center is currently slated to have solar panels, there is nothing keeping the board from opting to make solar panels a part of other bond projects. However, the original bond did not mention photovoltaic (PV) panels; and PV was brought into discussion relatively late into the process. Although PV may reduce the amount of building that can be done under this bond, it should save the district money in the long run by cutting down on electricity costs.

F4. Detailed plans now exist to provide the tools to track future modernization schedules and spending.

We agree with this statement; however, more planning should be done specifying the number and size of classrooms to ensure that there is adequate space when construction is completed.



Enrollment Management

- F5. COM has experienced a general enrollment decline extending back 20 years, mainly attributable to demographic factors of Marin County. Because enrollment represents the lifeblood of a college, it is vitally important that this trend be reversed.**

Enrollment figures for the 2006-2007 academic year increased in comparison to other years. However, credit students do not constitute the entire student population. The college enrolled more than 1,600 non-credit English as a Second Language (ESL) students in spring 2007 and maintains a waiting list of approximately 200 more. Community Education Services (CES) enrolled almost 2200 students during the winter quarter, of which there were more than 700 Emeritus College older-adult students. This brings the total College of Marin enrollment to more than 10,000. The rate of growth in the CES and non-credit programs has been encouraging; nine new ESL sections were added in the last academic year, adding 200 students to the program. Starting this summer ESL classes will be offered at the Indian Valley Campus (IVC) for the first time in 20 years.

- F6. Enrollment efforts intensified in 2006-2007, with \$500,000 budgeted to support an enrollment work plan. Results are encouraging. Overall, enrollment held steady for both terms this academic year versus a year ago.**

This only includes credit student enrollment – see response to F5, above.

- F7. The enrollment work plan has the necessary details for tracking progress on goals and accountability, but it lacks data collection tools to assess which programs are most effective, and guide future enrollment project funding.**

The district recently installed an electronic data tracking system, but one must bear in mind that enrollment management is very complex and separating so many variables may be entirely impossible.

- F8. Using IVC to focus on vocational development is appropriate, given projections that the supply of college-educated workers will not meet the future workforce needs of California.**

We agree with this statement.

- F9. Until recently, insufficient attention has been paid to the timely and successful formation of college/community partnerships.**

Because of the constantly rotating nature of leadership in the Associated Students, we can neither agree nor disagree with this statement.



Accreditation Warning

- F10. COM has always been fully accredited, but it was placed on warning by WASC in early 2005 and was given five recommendations to fulfill.**

We agree with this statement.

- F11. The college has made great strides, completing four of the five WASC recommendations. Warning status has been continued for a third year due to delays in approval and implementation of a program review process.**

A pilot program review process was implemented in spring 2007 after a program review plan was approved in fall 2006. The students were involved in the drafting and approval process of the plan and are confident that the college will be taken off warning in January 2008.

- F12. A "pilot" program review process is now being implemented. COM is expected to remain on warning status at least until WASC makes its next decision in January 2008.**

See response to F11.

Fiscal

- F13. COM is one of only three of California's 109 community colleges that qualify for funding under Basic Aid, which provides much higher revenue from property taxes than the state's enrollment-based formula (Apportionment).**

We agree with this statement.

- F14. Due to small average class size and Basic Aid funding, COM spends well over twice as much per student as the average of California community college receives from the state's Apportionment formula.**

Average class size is independent of funding sources; and smaller classes usually benefit student learning. Under-enrolled classes are governed in the Marin Community College District (MCCD) collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the United Professors of Marin (UPM), AFT Local 1610. However, student fees only cover a small portion of the cost to offer a class. Relative to the entire cost of the course (e.g., faculty salary, etc.), fluctuations in student fees received do not drastically affect the amount of money the district must pay to offer the class. For example, a 3-unit class with 25 students gets the district approximately \$1,500 in student fees (at \$20 per unit per semester).

- F15. Possible loss of the COM's "Basic Aid Increment" is a risk not faced by most other community colleges.**

We agree with this statement.





Response to Grand Jury Recommendations

- R1. The Board and administration closely scrutinize progress on approved target dates and spending plans, requiring stricter accountability to ensure construction projects stay on time and within budget.**
- R2. Administration perform more research to determine which aspects of the enrollment work plan are most effective, as an aid to future funding decisions.**
- R3. The board and administration provide more focus on efforts to develop IVC college/community partnerships, Such efforts should include specific milestones, timelines, completion dates and individuals responsible.**

We have no response to R1-R3.

- R4. The board closely monitor progress on program review through monthly reports from administration, to ensure successful implementation and COM's removal from WASC warning status.**

While the success of program review is vitally important to the future of the College, we would caution the board and administration from taking too active and authoritative stance that could impede on the Title V rights of the students, faculty and staff in driving the decision making of program review.

- R5. COM's Fiscal Services Department establish for board approval a policy for gradually increasing reserves, with a goal of having reserves equal the Basic Aid Apportionment funding differential (\$14 million in 2006-2007).**

We have no response to R5.

- R6. The board work with administration to establish a standardized, systematic approach to management and accountability for all board goals and priorities each year. This would include detailed definitions for goal priorities each year. This would include detailed definitions for goal priorities of expected progress, outcomes and effectiveness, monitored continually throughout the year.**

As with Recommendation R4, the board and administration must be weary of trampling student and faculty rights under Title V and Education Code. We feel that the board and administration cannot work in a vacuum of sorts; isolated from input in the greater college community. We recommend, therefore, that the board and administration work through the new Participatory Governance System to address these goals to broaden the sense of community in the College decision making process and ensure proper representation of all those with vested interest in the continued success of the College of Marin.