

Saturday, January 29, 2011

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142nd Year No. 140

## COLLEGES

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large part of the budget," Lewis said. "Higher education is an area that people tend to support, and we're hopeful that the tax proposals will pass."

Despite a survey by the Public Policy Institute of California that shows 55 percent of voters support the governor's tax plan, proposing any taxes or fees during an economic recession is a risky endeavor.

In a special election in May 2009, voters rejected a series of tax increases proposed by then-Gov.

Arnold Schwarzenegger. Then in the November election, they gave a thumbs-down to a ballot measure to increase vehicle licensing fees by \$18, which would have fully funded all of California's state parks.

Because any tax increase requires a two-thirds majority vote from lawmakers, getting it on the ballot would require some Republican support. Many fiscally conservative lawmakers have rejected such pro-

posals.

However the budget affects Cabrillo, Lewis said that it could result in a reduction in per-pupil funding, which will likely mean that the college will have to eliminate classes.

Which classes would be affected have yet to be decided, but in 2009 and 2010, when the college was forced to cut hundreds of classes, school officials said they focused their scalpels on courses that fell outside the college's "core mission."

Brown also proposes raising community college fees from \$26 to \$36 per credit. Although that increase would generate \$110 million for the colleges and allow them to support an additional 50,000 students, the cuts would translate to at least 400,000 students losing access to classes, according to a study by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

That increase, Lewis said, would mean that many students would not be able to attend Cabrillo. The situation would be compounded for those who cannot afford the fees but do not qualify for fi-

nancial aid.

Lewis said administrators plan to help those students boost their chances to get some type of financial assistance, but the reality is that many simply won't qualify, Lewis said.

"Part of our population would just be shut out," she said.

The good news, Lewis said, is that Cabrillo won't face any cuts during this school year.

Faced with the likelihood of budget cuts last year, Cabrillo administrators set aside a \$7 million reserve for the 2011-12 school year.

When Brown's budget is finalized, the college's board of directors will work with the community to decide how that money will be used, Lewis said.

Cabrillo College president Brian King said the college is already reeling from three years of budget cuts, during which more than \$5 million was axed.

"For Cabrillo, the budget is an unpleasant dose of reality, with where the state is, and some of the challenges looming for us," he said.

## Community colleges bracing for budget cuts Fee increase may also be on the way

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

If a proposal by Gov. Jerry Brown to extend a five-year extension on temporary taxes from the 2009 Budget Act passes muster with voters, California's community colleges can expect a \$400 million cut for the next school year as early as June.

That cut would have a resounding effect on programs, staffing and services throughout the entire state system. And that's the best-case scenario.

If the measure fails, Brown will be forced to cut more, increasing community colleges' financial burden to \$1 billion statewide.

In his Jan. 10 budget proposal, Brown sought to reduce an estimated \$25 billion deficit by making a series of drastic cuts. While K-12 education was largely spared, the state's colleges were targeted for massive cuts.

The University of California and the California State University systems are each facing \$500 million in cuts.

In the meantime, Cabrillo College administrators are planning for what is almost certain to be serious financial difficulty.

"At this point we're viewing the governor's proposal as the best-case scenario for the community college system," said Victoria Lewis, vice president of administrative services.

If Brown's proposal does go through as proposed, Cabrillo College is facing a budget deficit of \$4.2 million.

If voters reject the tax proposal, however, Cabrillo could find itself with a deficit ranging from \$6.7 million to \$10 million, Lewis said.

"We're hopeful the voters will understand that education and health and welfare is really a