

Bookshop Santa Cruz to Help with Cabrillo College Bookstore

by Linda Fridy

The unexpected resignation of the manager of Cabrillo College's bookstore resulted in the public community college "partnering" with Bookshop Santa Cruz, college officials announced. The local retailer began its three-month contract to help with the transition on Sept. 14.

Cabrillo Bookstore manager Robin Ellis had been working on a new business plan to address the ongoing drop in text book sales, said Victoria Lewis, Cabrillo's vice president of administrative services, and that review will continue once the daily management is stabilized.

"[Bookshop Santa Cruz] is not taking over the college bookstore. It is strictly coming in to provide interim management and expertise," Lewis said.

When the college received Ellis' resignation, Lewis said it reached out to most if not all of the local bookstores for immediate management help. Bookshop Santa Cruz agreed to share its experience. Bookshop Santa Cruz is owned by the Coonerty family. Former Santa Cruz City councilman and now-county supervisor Neil Coonerty and his son, Santa Cruz mayor Ryan Coonerty, own the long established Bookshop in downtown Santa Cruz.

Lewis said the college appreciates both the management support and Bookshop Santa Cruz's insight into the industry.

"It can offer a fresh perspective about options [for the future] as well," she said.

Innovation Sought

Under Ellis, the college's bookstore implemented a textbook rental pro-

gram through a federal grant. That grant expires this month, said Lewis, although the store has developed a library of texts for rent available at about 60 percent off list price.

However, rentals don't generate much income for the store, which is expected to be self-sufficient while still providing affordable course material to students. And purchases have been hit students who opt to simply go without textbooks or buy through less expensive online alternatives.

"It's a very challenging problem," Lewis said.

Ellis had worked with the small business development center on the business plan and presented it to the bookstore committee, but resigned before the plan was reviewed by campus supervisors, Lewis said.

The college is using the three-month contract with Bookshop Santa Cruz to continue looking at operating

options, and officials have not decided whether to search for a new store manager, she said. The Student Senate is actively involved in the discussion as well.

Another student service area, duplications, had a recent retirement and the college is investigating whether there may be synergies between those areas, she said.

The duplications department makes copies of supplemental, non-copyrighted materials for courses.

The bookstore is not the only service area that has been under review.

Lewis said the college conducted a survey of food service last spring, ahead of the expiration of an exclusive contract with Taher at the end of this school year. Results of the survey are being used to help develop the request for proposal for food service bids, which is expected to go out in January. ■